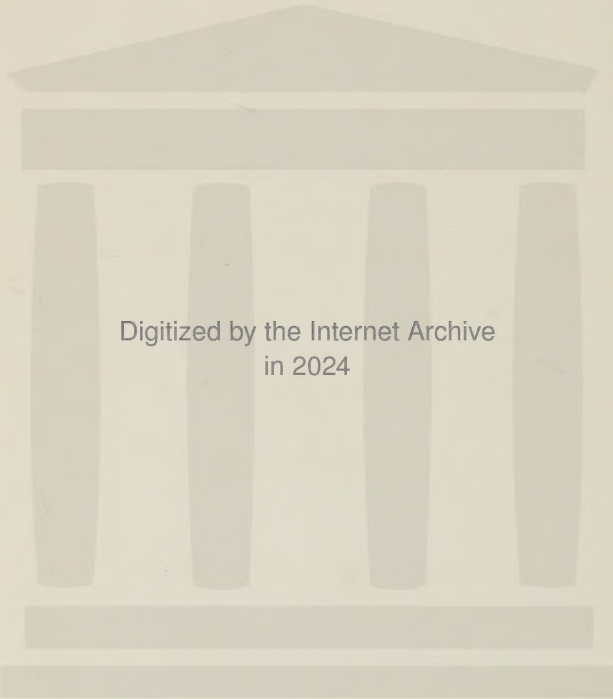


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Special Issue on the Church

The Editor

The churches of Christ have a great message for Christendom. They are carrying on the great plea of the 19th century Restoration of Stone, Scott, the Campbells, *et al.*, for the unity of the church through the restoration of the New Testament church.

The present Quarterly is not a full and systematic discussion of that idea, but it presents studies tending to support the validity of the plea. Especially does it deal with some basic questions about the origin of the church and the possibility of identifying the essential features of the apostolic church. It presents material to show how the church became apostate through the centuries and to point the way toward restoring the original church.

We believe that the Gospel of Christ is not an ideology, arising out of the concepts of the environment of the first century, but that it was founded by a saviour Jesus Christ, who conceived of himself as the founder of the church and of that church as the fulfillment of the expectations of the Old Covenant. The early apostolic church was the product of the representatives chosen by Jesus for the very work of establishing and building up that church. Its essential unity as the saved body of Christ constituted of baptized believers in whom the Spirit dwells is the main feature of the apostolic epistles and its final triumph the prediction of the apocalypse.

It is not obscurantism to believe that the New Testament is God's word. To be sure, that Testament was developed in the church, but through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Since these Scriptures are our Divine witness to the truth, they ought to be considered the final and complete revelation of God with respect to the church which is His body. They are the complete and final source of authority for the people of God.

Once this is accepted, there is a recognizable pattern of doctrine, organization, worship, and fellowship for the church.

The plea of the 19th century Reformers was that by restoring each local congregation to that original the unity which was the "essential, intentional, and constitutional" condition of the original church could be achieved. They recognized that to achieve this denominational creeds, names, organizations must be abandoned since such control mechanisms of denominationalism are what stand in the way of unity. The pioneer work such as the O'Kelly-Elia Smith-Abner Jones (Christian Connection) movement; the Barton Stone work of Kentucky; and the Campbell movement of Pa.-Va. Ohio of the late 18th and early 19th centuries needs to be studied anew. The O'Kelly-Jones movement first adopted a platform of

non-denominational Christianity with Christ as the only head of the church; the name Christian as the only name; and the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice. The Stone churches withdrew from Presbyterianism because they could not agree upon credal statements and formed their own synod only to dissolve it that they might "sink into union with the Body of Christ at large." The Campbellian churches joined the Mahoning Association only in turn to lead these churches to dissolve their association and leave themselves as free and independent churches of Christ. The step from there to the union and fellowship of parts of all these groups was only a short one; it consisted of the recognition that a common belief and practice made fellowship possible.

Present churches of Christ (including some million and a half in many countries of the world) are the rightful heirs of this work. They still insist, in spite of some difficulty in their own midst of recognizing the limitations of the pattern, that they are living proof that undenominational congregations of New Testament Christians are possible in an age of divided sects.

The editor regrets that a timely article by Pat Harrell on the Anabaptists, an early Protestant group with a plea for a return to the N. T. pattern, had to be omitted for lack of space. It will appear in a subsequent issue. Also an article on Jesus and the Church by the editor had to be omitted and will appear in a later number.

Background—

The Associations of the Graeco-Roman World

R. L. Johnston, Jr.

The church came into being in a climate of clubs and associations. "Probably no age, not even our own," writes Samuel Dill concerning the early Roman Empire, "ever felt a greater craving for some form of social life, wider than the family, and narrower than the State."¹ This feeling had been developing among the Greeks and Romans and even in the Hellenistic kingdoms, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia, over a long period of time. The beginning among the Greeks was very early. Gaius in his *Digesta* (XLVII. 22.4) quotes a law of Solon which recognized voluntary associations as legal and made their regulations binding upon their members where there was no violation of the laws of the State. Thucydides writes of political associations, apparently vicious, self-seeking and violent, in connection with revolutionary activities during the Peloponnesian Wars (III.82). Later he mentions similar organizations as instruments in the overthrow of the Athenian democracy (VIII. 54.4, 65). The records, almost entirely epigraphical, of societies of the Greeks date from the fourth century B.C. when inscriptions of associations of *orgeones* restricted to citizens appear in Athens.² The name suggests an urgency or excitement which must be associated here with religious feeling. Later in the same century, associations of *thiasotai*, members of a religious guild, are seen. These were mainly for aliens, at times becoming national clubs for the worship of national deities. Although they were primarily religious in character, they were secondarily social organizations as well.³ In the middle of the third century, an increased emphasis on the social and economic aspects of life led to the formation of clubs of *eranistai*. The term denotes the participants in a common meal to which each person contributed his share. The association is still of a religious nature, but worship is subordinate to social and economic interests.⁴ At length the religious element is virtually dropped and *synodoi* or synods, according to Tod "purely secular" in character, are found in Athens.⁵ It is generally felt that the religious character of the societies remained at least incidentally a part of their make-up.

Among the Romans the *sodalitia*, associations for religious and social comradeship, and *collegia*, colleagueships, are reported to have existed at least as early as Numa. Plutarch attributes the formation of the trade guilds to that legendary king:

Of his other political measures, that which is most admired is his division of the populace according to their trades. . . . His division was according to their trades, and consisted of the

musicians, the goldsmiths, the builders, the dyers, the shoemakers, the carriers, the coppersmiths, and the potters.⁶

The evidence for the associations among the Romans as among the Greeks is to be found in inscriptions of which there are many. "The bulk of the evidence belongs to times later than Cæsar, Cicero, and Virgil, but conditions," according to Showerman, "were different only in degree, and not greatly different in that."⁷ Societies under the early Republic enjoyed complete freedom. They could be limited, of course, but the only early example of such limitation is the outlawing of the associations of the Bacchanals, worshippers of Dionysus, in 186 B.C. on grounds of immorality. Even then the worship of Dionysus under official supervision was permitted.⁸ In the later Republic the societies, now considered to be dangerous to public peace, were repressed by law in 64 B.C., but were revived again for political reasons in 58 B.C.⁹ Julius and Augustus abolished the right of association except for societies of ancient standing and those of religious character, together with the burial societies.¹⁰ The latter became a cover under which many kinds of associations existed. Generally, however, in the period of the Empire associations were regarded as politically dangerous. For example, Trajan denied a request of Pliny that an association of firemen be formed to guard Nicomedia against fire, writing, "Whatever title we give them, and whatever our object in giving it, men who are banded together for a common end will all the same become a political association before long."¹¹ Mary Johnston observes that "Government opposition to Christianity was due in large part to the fear that Christian organizations were, or might become, political in character."¹²

The tendency toward the formation of associations in the Hellenistic kingdoms is most marked in Egypt. They existed among foreigners in Pre-Ptolemaic times but attained prominence and importance under the Ptolemies. Self-governing *poleis*, cities, were organized "by the will and decision of the king" for the foreigners where they lived in groups. Those not so organized were encouraged to form *koina*, private associations, possessing a certain degree of self-government. There were also *gymnasia* or schools with gymnasia associations privileged by the king to own property such as money, buildings, furniture and land. For these, Rostovtzeff observes, "the gymnasia were not only schools. They were also the centre of their own intellectual and creative activities, which were essentially Greek. The gymnasium played in their lives the part of a permanent clubhouse: it was their main social centre."¹³ "In the *chora* the Greeks lived, not in cities, but scattered over native towns and villages. It was natural, in these circumstances, that they should create for themselves various substitutes for city life, among which were the private religious and social associations."¹⁴ There is less information about such organizations in the kingdoms of Syria,

Mesopotamia, and Palestine. Only the gymnasia are known to have existed there. In these lands, however, the Greeks lived in cities with full rights of citizenship.¹⁵

These ancient associations extended throughout the entire Greek and Roman world and cover a period of seven centuries from the fourth century B.C. to the third century A.D. Yet they were almost entirely local.¹⁶ A few extended over an island or a province: only one, the Dionysiac Artists of which the actor members were continually moving about, became a culture-wide organization with headquarters in Rome and affiliated branches throughout the Empire.¹⁷ "The Christian communities were exceptional in the closeness of their interrelation with each other. The membership of the majority of the collegia, even of those which were primarily religious, was purely local."¹⁸

The development of the associations is attributed to religious, social and economic needs. Tod points out that during the classical period a man belonged to a phratry, a deme, a tribe, and a state. Each of these had its meetings and festivals which satisfied his religious aspirations to a certain extent and gave him opportunity for fellowship. Inasmuch as he had a sense of belonging, there was no need for voluntary associations. With the growth of the empires, however, and the cosmopolitanism which accompanied it, men lost their political ideals and their civic enthusiasm: there was created a need for the fellowship and sense of mutuality which the clubs could offer.¹⁹ Of the Roman Empire Dill observes, "In the blank wilderness, created by a universal despotism, the craving for sympathy and mutual succour inspired a great social movement, which legislation was powerless to check."²⁰ But the desire for religious fellowship and common worship contributed even more to the development of voluntary societies.²¹ Illustrative of the fulfillment of this need are the mystery religions, especially the Eleusinia. "The assurance of the hope of the Eleusinian votary was obtained by the feeling of friendship and mystic sympathy, established by the mystic contact, with . . . the power of life after death," says one author.²² Another writer asserts that "the whole system of mysteries endured to the very end of pagan times, for the deeper meaning of its symbolism offered a certain satisfaction even to the religious requirements of the educated, which they failed to find in the empty forms of ordinary worship."²³ A third aspect of the development of societies, at least in the case of the guilds, was that of economic need. Tod believes that the guilds developed when the head of the family began to accept apprentices and teach them the secrets of his trade for money.²⁴ Of these factors the latter is the least significant and the weightiest is the matter of religious need.

Just as the societies developed as the result of religious and social need, so were their purposes and their functions religious and social.

Nor were the two sharply distinguished. Even the trade guilds existed primarily for religious and social purposes. "The trade guilds of antiquity were primarily, or even exclusively, religious and social, and did not normally seek to regulate or modify the conditions under which industry was carried on."²⁵ The unions of tradesmen, in which nearly every trade was represented, did not have purposes which characterize modern labor organizations. Though some societies were named after their localities and others were named after some person prominent in connection with them, many had names which indicate their prevailing religious character, for example the *Apolloniastai*, the *Dionysiastai* or the *Heracleistai*. Still others showed a religious nature by prefixing the epithet "holy" or "most holy" to the name of the association.²⁶ Some associations existed for the purpose, whether it was primary or an additional advantage, of providing proper burial and commemoration for their members. In this connection Halliday writes:

Characteristic are the burial clubs, the primary function of which was to provide members at death with a decent funeral, rescuing them from the common pit into which the bodies of the destitute were cast, and at the same time to afford the living members periodic opportunities for social reunion. At these meetings of the living the memory of the dead was kept alive, a form of vicarious immortality to which pagan sentiment attached a pathetic importance.²⁷

But most important in the daily lives of the members was the social aspect of the clubs. "In truth, the great object of association among these humble people appears to have been . . . the cheerfulness of intercourse, the promotion of fellowship and good will, the relief of the dullness of humdrum lives."²⁸ The chief function of all guilds was the common dinner, and Reid observes that "the 'calendar of dinners' (*ordo cenarum*) was a serious document in every college."²⁹

The benefits which the societies offered to their members were very real ones. First of all there was the experience of common worship ranging from the libations before the common meal to participation in the secret rituals of the mysteries. Next, and perhaps most satisfying, was the occasion for social intercourse. The monthly dinners, the holy days observed and the various anniversaries kept by the society were occasions of fellowship and mutuality very important to its members. Moreover, social distinctions were forgotten for the most part, and a man might attain prominence and hold office in his association. "Thus the socially down-trodden might experience a certain social importance, and this, however lowly might be the company in which it was exercised, gratified a need of self-respect. Here was the real social merit of these institutions."³⁰ Many associations provided burial benefits for their members. These might consist in cash payments to defer funeral expenses, in conducting the details of the funeral through a committee appointed for that purpose, or in actually providing the place of burial in an as-

sociation columbarium. In addition to these, certain societies enjoyed specific privileges. The Association of Worshippers of the Muses in Alexandria enjoyed exemption from public burdens, board and lodging at public expense and a certain stipend.³¹ Military clubs were strictly forbidden, but the restrictions were relaxed in the cases of officers and of highly skilled corps. These were burial clubs, but their primary benefit was insurance against the principal risks and occasions of expenditure for soldiers.³² The Koinon of Greeks in Asia was granted military exemption, freedom from public burdens and other immunities at the request of Anthony.³³ Beneficences appear to have been rare. The tailors at Thyatira, however, provided lodging places for strangers in the name of the Cæsars.³⁴ Halliday notes that "Charitable funds of this kind were a creation of the Christian communities and as Tertullian rightly claims, a real difference distinguishes the common funds of Christians from those of pagan societies."³⁵

Into such an environment, then, came the new church, not so much a stranger as one might suppose. Its meetings were called by a name used by other religious associations to designate their meetings. The custom of mutual contribution to the treasuries of societies had prepared the people for a similar contribution to the church. It is possible that the institution of patronage, one of the chief sources of support for the various associations, found its expression among the wealthy of the church as well. This would not have been intended to purchase the regard and support of members of the church as the patronage of the associations sought to buy their influence, but a Philemon would find in the custom a suggestion for liberality and open his home to a church and his resources to the poor. The common meal corresponded to the *agape* or love feast of Christians. The organization of a church was not greatly different from that of an association. In fact, Hatch believes that the concentration of the power of the eldership into the hands of a single bishop grew out of the management of the funds of the church in very much the same way that the funds of the associations were managed.³⁶ As a religious association, therefore, the church was acceptable to men throughout the Empire.

Several factors influenced its acceptance among those who had manifested in their history a readiness to receive new religions through their associations before they were accepted officially by the state. First of all the church offered men an opportunity to give expression to their religious instincts in a highly moral way and with a hope superior even to that of the mysteries. Secondly, there was the social aspect: the church was open, as the associations had been, to all classes of society. The faith alone was the basis for association, however, and the church was broader in this respect than the Greek and Roman societies before it had been. Men

found fellowship, sympathy and mutuality within the church regardless of their social stations. But most important is the awareness of significance which came to men through Christianity. This was not a significance gained through office holding and the recognition of one's fellows, but a significance in the eyes of God, a reason for being that gave purpose to life. In these ways the needs which caused men to band themselves together in associations found their fulfillment in the new church.

¹Samuel Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius* (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1919), p. 267.

²Marcus N. Tod, *Sidelights on Greek History* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1932), p. 74.

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Life of Numa*, XVII.

⁷Grant Showerman, *Rome and the Romans* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), p. 245.

⁸A. E. R. Boak, *A History of Rome to 565 A.D.* (fourth edition; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 167.

⁹Dill, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 254-255.

¹¹Pliny, *Letters*, X.34.

¹²Mary Johnston, *The Private Life of the Romans*, (New York: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1932), p. 346, footnote 1.

¹³M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social & Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1941), II, 1059.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 1064.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, *passim*.

¹⁶Tod, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

¹⁷W. R. Halliday, *The Pagan Background of Early Christianity* (Liverpool: The University Press of Liverpool, Ltd., 1925), p. 59.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

¹⁹Tod, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.

²⁰Dill, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

²¹Tod, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

²²L. R. Farnell and H. J. Rose, "Mystery," *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* (14th ed.), XVI, 48.

²³Oskar Seyffert, "Mysteries," *Dictionary of Classical Antiquities* (Revised and edited by Henry Nettleship and J. E. Sandys; New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1956), p. 410.

²⁴Tod, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 82.

²⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 75-77.

²⁷Halliday, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

²⁸Dill, *op. cit.*, pp. 266-267.

²⁹James S. Reid, *The Municipalities of the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1913), pp. 517-518.

³⁰Halliday, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62.

³¹Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, III, 1596.

³²Dill, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-284.

³³Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, II, 1005-1006.

³⁴Reid, *op. cit.*, p. 518.

³⁵Halliday, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

³⁶Edwin Hatch, *The Organization of the Early Christian Churches* (London: Rivingtons, 1882), pp. 36ff.

The Jewish Background of the Church

Jack P. Lewis

The Jewish background of the church will be considered in this paper firstly from lexical contributions; secondly from the contributions of selected doctrinal concepts; and thirdly from the contributions of institutions.

I. The Lexical Background of *Ekklesia*:¹

Already prior to the choice of the word *ekklesia*, or its equivalent in Aramaic, by Jesus to designate his people (Mt. 16:18; 18:17),² the word which to the Greek connoted an assembly regardless of its purpose,³ had a religious history. The LXX translators had chosen *ekklesia* primarily to render *qahal* in about one hundred cases. The choice is probably due to the tendency of the translators to choose a Greek word with a like sound and etymology to the Hebrew word.⁴ Neither *qahal* nor *ekklesia* occur in the plural in the O. T. except for Ps. 25[26]12 and 67[68]26 where *ekklesia* is plural. Only in four instances does *ekklesia* render another word than *qahal*: 1 Sam. 19:20; Neh. 5:7; Ps. 26:12; 68:27; but in the latter three of these it renders a word from the same root as *qahal*.

However the LXX translators did not feel the need of absolute uniformity in the rendering of a word, therefore *qahal* is at times also rendered *sunagogue*. This is particularly observable in the first four books of Moses where *ekklesia* was not used by them at all. In sixteen instances in the later books of the Bible *sunagogue* renders *qahal*.

Sunagogue was also used by the LXX to render *'edah* which means an assembly regardless of its nature. However, there are some instances in which it seems clearly to designate a religious community.⁵

For all practical purposes, no clear distinction is to be made for the early period between *qahal* and *'edah* or *ekklesia* and *sunagogue*. The people of the Old Testament may be known by either term (cf. Acts 7:38). The Christian people may use either of the Gk. terms as a self-designation.⁶ About the middle of the first century A.D., both *qahal* and *'edah* ceased to be used and *Kenneset* takes their place. This term, which does not occur in the O.T., also means a congregation.⁷ In due time the Greek Jews came to prefer *sunagogue* and *ekklesia* came to be used less frequently. Burton suggests that *ekklesia* was rejected by Jews because of a desire to distinguish Jewish from secular assemblies. Then in turn Christians, wishing to distinguish themselves from Jewish assemblies, came to reject *sunagogue*.⁸ This may have happened, but evidence to establish or disprove is lacking.

Looking more closely, we learn that *qahal* used by itself in the O.T. means an actual assembly or meeting of some kind, which need by no means be a religious assembly.⁹ *Qahal* is, however at times, used in connection with a religious assembly. The clearest instances are Deut. 4:10; 9:10; 10:4; and 18:16.

Further defined in a genitive construction, a *qahal* may be of the sons of Israel (Num. 14:5); of Israel (Lev. 16:17; Deut. 31:30; Josh. 8:35; 1 Kings 8:14, 55; 8:22; 12:3; 1 Chron. 13:2; 2 Chron. 6:3, 12, 13); of people (Gen. 28:3; 48:4; Jer. 26:17; Ezek. 23:24; 32:3; Ps. 107:32); of nations (Jer. 50:9; Gen. 35:11); of evil doers (Ps. 26:5); of Judah (2 Chron. 30:25; 2 Chron. 20:5); of people of God (Judges 20:2); a holy congregation (Ps. 89:6); an assembly of faithful (Ps. 149:1); of the dead (Prov. 21:16); of exiles (Ezra 10:8). Or it may be an assembly of the congregation of Israel, in which case *'edah* and *qahal* are both used (Ex. 12:6; Num. 14:5). There are also other uses with personal pronouns, not religious in character.

The phrase *qahal adonai* or its equivalent occurs in seven passages in the O.T. in contexts which designate the religious community of Israel (Num. 16:3; 20:4; 1 Chron. 28:8; Deut. 23:1-9 (6 cases); Neh. 13:1; Lam. 1:10; Micah 2:5). A problem immediately presents itself whether *qahal* thus qualified retains its ordinary meaning of an assembly in which case only a service of worship would be spoken of, or whether it designates the people of God as a whole whether assembled or not. Does *qahal* ever mean a community even though not assembled as we have seen is true of *'edah*? If not, then these passages may antecede such an idea as that of 1 Cor. 11:18 where "church" seems to refer to a worship service; however they would not explain other aspects of the N.T. idea, for no one would contend that the *ekklesia* goes out of existence when the meeting breaks up.¹⁰

One is tempted to find in the phrase *qahal adonai* the antecedent of the phrase *ekklesia Kurion* (cf. Acts 20:28; however note that LXX has *sunagogue* in the relevant O.T. passage, Ps. 73[74].2) or the phrase *ekklesia Theou* which occurs nine times in the N.T. But when he turns to the LXX, he discovers that two of the O.T. passages (Num. 16:3; 20:4) are rendered *sunagogue Kurion*. It is not likely that they would have suggested the phrase to the N.T. writers. While it is true that *ekklesia* is used in the other passages, one is still faced with the question: Do they mean a community, or do they merely mean an assembly?

We are not helped a great deal in this problem by a study of Jewish materials around the N.T. period. The Qumran community used *qahal* very sparingly in the non-Biblical materials that have thus far been published. An examination of the relevant passages reveals that they classify themselves into the familiar groups of O.T. usage,

showing that for this community the word had not assumed a distinctive technical meaning:

1. There are the non-religious usages: The military opposition to the wars of the children of Light is so designated that the congregation of the human is contrasted with the divine (I Q. M. 1:10). There is the throng of Gog (I Q. M. 11:16); the hosts of opposition (I Q. M. 15:10); the hordes of heathen gathered for extermination (I Q. M. 14:5; cf. use in Ezekiel for enemy armies); and the hordes of the wicked (I Q. Thanksgiving Song 2:12).

2. A religious gathering for worship seems indicated in the passage "where men foregather, I will call thee blessed." (I Q. Thanksgiving Song 2:30).

3. There is a doubtful case in the Manual of Discipline (7:20) where *qahal* is stricken out and *msqb* is written above the line.

4. This leaves only two cases demanding more careful consideration: "Assembly of God (*Qehal el*)" is the name on the sixth banner along with names "armies of God" and the "called of God" on the other banners (I Q. M. 4:10). The unclean man may not enter the "congregation of El" (I Q. Sam. 2:4); we assume *elh* is an error for *el*. Closely related to these are cases previously known from the *Cairo Damascus Covenant*: "When the trumpets of the congregation sound" (CDC. 11:22); and a man who profanes the Sabbath shall not come into the congregation for seven years (CDC. 12:6; cf. 15:17; and perhaps 14:18 where the text is defective). In these materials one is still faced with the problem of whether these are worship assemblies or standing designations for the general community. Is there any ground for thinking that an Israel within Israel is intended?

The Greek Jewish writers do not reflect that it had become customary in pre-Christian times to speak dogmatically of the "Church of Israel." Such usage is not to be found in either Philo or Josephus.¹¹ One reads of a Jewish group, "The assembly," in Jerusalem (I Macc. 14:19), but in other books in the Apocrypha *ekklesia* is clearly used for gatherings other than for worship. Ben Sira used the word twelve times. A few times it is for a group of worshippers (50:13, 20); but elsewhere it is for other gatherings (eg. 26:5; 38:33). It is possible, but not certain that the congregation which declares alms (31:11) may refer to more than to one particular meeting. Of more interest, however, is the phrase "in the congregation" (21:17; 38:33); "in the congregation of the Most High" (24:2) which might well describe a worship meeting to be compared to "in the church" (1 Cor. 11:18).¹²

We conclude then, that *ekklesia* in Judaism may well refer to assemblies for worship and other purposes, but as a designation for a standing community the evidence is not forthcoming. This concept is a contribution of Christianity.

II. Religious Concepts Forming the Jewish Background of the Church:

The church arose from the bosom of first century Judaism. Its earliest members were Jews. In common with that Judaism the church retained a belief in the one God (cf. Rom. 9:1-6; 3:29); in the O.T. Scriptures (I Cor. 9:10; 10:1ff; 15:3; Rom. 15:4); and in the Messiah. But these and many well known items as well as details of typology we pass over for the present to note only a few important concepts that lie back of the doctrine of the church.

A. The People of God (Cf. Judg. 5:11).¹³

The doctrine of election in the O.T. serves to explain the paradox that the God and creator of the universe can have a chosen people (Deut. 10:14). Out of all the peoples of the earth, God has chosen (*bahar*) Israel as his own. Two stages are observable in the choice. First he chose Abraham (Neh. 9:7; Ps. 105:5-10, 43); but he has also chosen Israel out of Egypt (Deut. 4:20; Ez. 20:5; Hos. 11:1) to be a special people (Deut. 7:6; 14:2).

The fact of the choice is continuously affirmed, especially in those sections of the Bible dealing with the exile when despair threatened as the people wailed: "We are clean cut off"; or in sections where others said they had been cut off (Isa. 41:8; 44:1, 2; 49:7; Jer. 33:24; cf. Deut. 7:6). The election is set forth in such figures as marriage (Hos. 1-3; Jer. 2:1-7; Ez. 16; 23; Isa. 50:1; 54:5); and in the Father and son relationship (Ex. 4:22; Hos. 11:1). Israel had become God's portion, the apple of His eye (Deut. 32:8ff).

The basis upon which the choice had been made gave the O.T. writers more difficulty. It is denied that Israel was chosen because of her numbers or greatness (Deut. 7:7, 8). Nor was it because of her goodness or merit (Deut. 9:4, 5). The most clear answer is that God chose Israel because God loved the fathers (Deut. 10:15; 4:37); or to keep His promise made to the fathers (Deut. 7:8; 9:5). Elsewhere God chose them for His own sake or the sake of His name (Ps. 106:8); or that he loved Israel with no reason given (Deut. 7:7). God did not choose Israel because he needed her. He was free to reject her (Num. 14:12; Ex. 32:14).

Despite the fact that the choice was not conditioned on past merit, there were conditions for Israel to meet if she were to continue in God's choice. She must choose God (Joshua 24:14-24); she must love God (Deut. 6:5); and she must obey and keep the covenant (Ex. 19:4-6; Deut. 8:6-11). The O.T. does not know the idea of the Apocrypha that the world was created for Israel (Ass. Mos. 1:12; cf. Hermas, *Vis.* 2:4:1). Hers was a place of responsibility. She only had been known of God; and for this reason, in her unfaithfulness, her sin must be visited upon her (Amos 3:2).

The writers of the N.T. adopt the idea of a chosen people from the O.T., but deny that this position is dependent on the flesh. "The

kingdom is taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth fruits thereof (Matt. 21:43)." Israel after the flesh is contrasted with the Israel of God (1 Cor. 10:18; Gal. 6:16). Natural branches were broken off (Rom. 11:17ff). There are those who say they are Jews, but are not (Rev. 2:9; 3:9).

All that Israel had from God, the church has through Christ. They are the sojourners of the dispersion (1 Pet. 1:1); the twelve tribes of the dispersion (Jas. 1:1). The titles of privilege are theirs: a chosen race (1 Pet. 2:9; Isa. 43:20, 21; cf. II Bar. 48:20; IV Ezra 5:23); a royal priesthood (Ex. 19:6; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; a holy nation (Deut. 7:6). For this reason its members are called "saints": Rom. 1:7; 12:13; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 9:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:12; Phile. 5; 1 Thess. 3:13; 2 Thess. 1:10; c. Eph. 2:19; 5:26f; Acts 20:32. The root of the idea is from Ex. 19:6; Deut. 7:6; Ps. 89:7; 106:16; Dan. 7:18; Ps. Sol. 17:18); God's own people (Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; 1 Pet. 2:9); the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:2); the household of God (1 Pet. 4:17); People of God (Rom. 9:25f); children of God (Rom. 8:16f, 21; 9:7); Sons of God (Gal. 4:6; 2 Cor. 6:18; Rom. 8:14; 19, 29; 9:26). The church is the new Israel, the legitimate heir of the promises of the O.T. (Gal. 6:15-17).¹⁴

B. Covenant:¹⁵

The word *berith* occurs in the O.T. both for relationships between men and men and for those between God and man. God made covenants in the time of Noah (Gen. 9:8-17) and Abraham (Gen. 17:1-14; Gal. 3:15). But the major covenant is that one made with His chosen at Sinai (cf. Rom. 9:4; Eph. 2:12; Deut. 4:23; 1 Kings 8:21). A *berith* is an agreement made between two parties in which each are mutually bound. The fact that the LXX chose *diatheke* (which may also designate a disposition of property by a will) in 257 times, rather than *suntheke*, should not hide the role of the two parties. A covenant is validated by a ceremony (Gen. 15; Jer. 34:10f). That at Sinai is validated by sprinkling blood on the people and the book (Ex. 24:7). The people agree and respond to the covenant (Deut. 7:7-10). Reduced to its simplest terms, the covenant said, "You shall be to me a people, and I will be God to you" (Ex. 6:7; Lev. 26:12; Deut. 29:12; Jer. 7:23). This gives the world the concept of a people bound together by a common religion rather than by national solidarities or government.¹⁶

The prophets indict the people for having broken the covenant. In such cases God was no longer bound. The covenant not only had its promises, but also its threats (Jer. 11:6-10). In a sense, in the exile, God renounced the covenant (cf. CDC. 1:1-2:2).

But just at this dark hour, Jeremiah introduced into the picture the idea of a new covenant to be made (Jer. 31:31; Isa. 61:8; Ez. 16:60-63). The Qumran sect, just prior to the Christian period, thought of themselves as the heirs of this new covenant (I Q. S. 1:8, 16, etc.). They were rebuilding the fallen tabernacle of David

(CDC. 7:16ff; cf. 20:13). In reality, however, their new covenant was merely a reaffirmation and reestablishment of the former covenant made at Sinai. It is at precisely this point that they were different from the early church.¹⁷

The N.T. writers envisioned the church as the heir of the new covenant promise. The cup is the New Covenant in Christ's blood (1 Cor. 11:25; Matt. 26:28). By this blood it is ratified (Heb. 9). Apostles are ministers of a new covenant—a dispensation of the spirit in contrast to that one stone (2 Cor. 3:3ff). The Epistle to the Hebrews twice quotes Jer. 31:31 as fulfilled in Christ. (Heb. 8:8-11; 10:16, 17). The church had not broken faith with God. It was the true heir of the covenant. The new is essentially different from the old in that it is written on the heart; men possess knowledge of divine things; and God is merciful toward sins.

C. The Remnant.¹⁸

The idea that only a small portion of the nation may be faithful to God, already to be seen in the Elijah story, is further developed in the prophets. This remnant may be that small portion that escapes the chastisements God sends on the nation as a whole—the legs and piece of an ear saved from the lion (Amos 3:12); or the brand plucked from burning (Amos 4:11). It is this group that is implied in the often used phrase: “the saved remnant”; for it is left over after the calamity (Isa. 6:13; 1:9; Micah 2:12ff; 5:7ff; Ez. 9:8). It may be no more than the few comparable to a few berries in the uppermost bough (Isa. 17:6).

It is particularly in Isaiah that the doctrine is elaborated (Is. 1:9; 4:3; 7:3; 8:18; 10:20ff; 17:4ff; 28:5; 37:31f). Isaiah named his son, “A Remnant Shall Return” (Isa. 7:3). It would seem that Isaiah and his disciples formed that remnant in his day (Isa. 8:16-17). The remnant would repent, return to God, and survive the coming calamity (Is. 10:20-24). It forms the seed of the new community (Isa. 8:16-18). It may be looked upon as a purified and holy group (Isa. 4:3-5).

The remnant idea may also take the form of a “saving remnant”—the one man who would save Jerusalem (Jer. 5:1); or the ten who could save Sodom (Gen. 18:32). Considered in the light of O.T. events, the remnant is to be gathered out of exile (Jer. 32:3f). Jeremiah had already identified the exiles with the good figs—the hope of the nation—in his parable (Jer. 24:1). When this group has been brought out of their graves (the exile), then they will know that God has spoken (Ez. 37:12-14); thus they carry a knowledge of God's will to a coming generation (cf. Isa. 8:16f). The term remnant is applied to the post exilic community by Haggai and Ezra (Hag. 1:12; 2:2; Ezra 9:8, 15).

The tendency in later writings is to make the survivors a righteous group. The wicked of the nation have been destroyed (Mal. 3:16, 17; 4:1-2). This idea is particularly carried forward in apocryphal literature (Ps. Sol. 17:23ff; I Enoch 62:7-8; 14:16). The Damascus sect felt themselves to be that remnant (CDC. 1:5; 3:13).¹⁹

The remnant idea makes it possible in the N.T. to distinguish between Israel and the righteous portion of it (Rom. 9:6). To establish this doctrine, Paul appeals to Isa. 10:22 (cf. Rom. 9:27) and to Isa. 1:9 (cf. Rom. 9:29). In these passages from Paul the remnant is made up of those few Jews who believe (Rom. 11:4ff). Does Paul identify the church, irrespective of nationality, with the remnant? Justin Martyr clearly made this identification (Dial. 32; 120), and called the church "Israel" (Dial. 135). Paul's phrase, "He is a Jew who is one inwardly" (Rom. 2:28); and "born according to the spirit" (Gal. 4:29); and "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16) would seem to make such an identification.²⁰ Thus the church is continuous with True Israel, but different from disobedient Israel. It is the faithful community to whom the promise has been given.

D. The Mission of Israel.²¹

Israel was chosen to be the vehicle through which all nations might be blessed in Abraham (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14). Her choice was an election to service, especially to love and worship God (Ex. 4:22; Deut. 7:9-16).

In the later books of the O.T. the ideal is held forth that God should be king over all the earth (Zech. 14:9); and that his worship should be over all the earth (Mal. 1:11). But it is in Isaiah that we see the mission of Israel most clearly. She is to be a "light to the nations" (Isa. 42:6; 49:6). She is a witness to the accomplishment of the prophecies of God; whereas idols have no witnesses that they can do either good or evil (Isa. 44:8). Through Israel nations come to know God (Isa. 45:6). Israel was to set forth God's praise (Isa. 44:1, 2; 49:6-7). She makes God's salvation known to the ends of the earth (Is. 49:3-9; 42:6-7).

These ideas of universalism are carried forward in the non-canonical literature. God's name will be great in every place of Israel and among the Gentiles (T. Dan. 6:7; cf. T. Levi 2:11; T. Sim. 6:5; T. Naph. 4:5;). The Son of Man is to be a light to the Gentiles (I Enoch 10:21; 48:4).

We are not surprised then, when Paul lists as first of the advantages of the Jews that they were entrusted with the oracles of God (Rom. 3:2); on the other hand, it is just this work of missionary endeavour that is assigned to the church in the N.T. God's manifold wisdom is to be made known through the church (Eph. 3:10). She is a light to the world (Matt. 5:14). The church has considered itself bound to go into all the world (Matt. 28:18-20).

III. Institutions:

A. The Temple.²²

The temple and its predecessor the tabernacle furnish the church with imagery to explain the sacrifice of Jesus and the spiritual service to be offered God by Christians. However, it is in imagery rather than in specific details of organization or worship that the temple stands in the background of the church. The temple was the place where God caused his name to dwell (Deut. 12:11; Ezra 6:12). It was the symbol of God in the midst of his people. In its courts the early meetings of the church were held (Acts 2:46; 3:1, 11; 5:12).

The church as a spiritual house, possessing the spirit, is a temple where God is glorified and truly served. It has its foundation; it is built of living stones; it is a habitation of God in the spirit (Eph. 2:19-22; cf. 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 2 Cor. 6:16). The service of the Christian is a spiritual sacrifice (1 Pet. 2:5; Heb. 13:15f).

B. Synagogue.²³

Side by side with the temple in the first century stood the synagogue with its religious instruction and its worship without sacrifice. Every sizeable Jewish village had its synagogue where men met to read the Bible, pray, and listen to a sermon. In these gatherings the Apostles found a hearing for their preaching, especially outside of Palestine (Acts 13:14; 14:1; 17:1; 18:4). Early Christian worship shows more similarities to synagogue worship than to temple worship.

The synagogue had its organization with apostles, servants, and elders. Some analogy may be seen between these and the organization of early churches. However, those who would entirely derive the organization of the early church from the synagogue are faced with the need of explaining why the church dropped the other officials known to the synagogue.

Conclusions:

To note the background of the church is not at all to affirm that the disciples aimed at being only a sect within Judaism; nor is it to affirm that there were no vital differences between the early church and the synagogue. Judaism is not the foundation of the church. The rock of the church is Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). The Jew is the son of the covenant and it is to be hoped he will recognize it (Acts 3:24-26; 2:39), for despite the Lord's threat (Matt. 21:43), there is still an opportunity to be a partaker of the promises. Only later is there a turning to the Gentiles.

From the beginning the church differed from Judaism in that it believed the prophecies were fulfilled. The new age had dawned. The Messiah had come, and that Messiah was Jesus. A man to be on the inside must confess Jesus as Lord and be baptized. But despite its independence, it is the O.T. promises in their various im-

plications and ramifications that furnish the thought patterns in which the church is presented to us.

¹This paper borrows heavily from the studies: K. L. Schmidt, "The Church" in *Bible Key Words from Gerhard Kittel's Theologische Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, J. R. Coates, tr. 75 pp., 1951; J. Y. Campbell, "The Origin of the Christian use of the Word 'Ekklesia'," *JTS.*, 49 (1948), 130-142.; and George Johnston, *The Church in the New Testament*, 1943, 156 pp.

²While it is agreed that Jesus spoke Aramaic, the word which he used is uncertain. It may well have been *kenishita* which is the Aramaic form of *kenneset*, meaning "assembly." This Aramaic word also stands for both *qahal* and 'edah. For the argument defending the authenticity of the passage, see R. N. Flew, *Jesus and His Church*, 1951.

³Cf. Acts 18.41; *ekklesia* is not a standing body, but each gathering is a different *ekklesia*.

⁴*Qahal* comes from a root which means to assemble; as *ekklesia* comes from *ekkaleo* which has the related meaning "to summons out." *Qahal* does not imply "called out of the world," nor has it been established that *ekklesia* has this meaning in the N.T. See K. L. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 31; F. J. A. Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, 1897, p. 5.

⁵Nu. 27.17; 31.16; Josh. 22.16-17; See R. H. Charles, *Apoc. and Pseud.* II, 802; F. Cross, *The Ancient Library At Qumran*, p. 57 for the Cairo Damascus Covenant and the Dead Sea Sect; and cf. G. Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 37 notes.

⁶Christian gatherings are called *synagogue* in Jas. 2.2 (but cf. 5.14); for the verb form see Heb. 10.25; II Thess. 2.1). Christians of Transjordan called both their meeting and meeting place *synagogue* (Epiphanius, *Haer.* 30.18.2). Other Christian examples are found in Ignatius *To Polycarp*, 4.2; Hermas, *Mand.* 11.9; 13.14; Justin, *Dial.* 63.5; Dionysius of Alexander (Euseb. *H.E.* 7.9.2; 11.1ff); and Clement of Alex. *Strom.* 6.34.3. The earliest Christian inscription has the phrase "*synagogue of the Marcionites*," see E. C. Blackman, *Marcion and His Influence*, p. 4.

⁷George Johnston, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.

⁸E. De Witt Burton, *Galatians* (ICC), pp. 417-420.

⁹The term is applied to the band of Korah (Num. 16.3); the company that complained against Moses (Nu. 20.4); the company of Simeon and Levi (Gen. 49.6); a company of evil doers (Ps. 26.5); a band of any sort (but not of Israel) fourteen times in Ezekiel; a military gathering (I Ch. 13.1).

¹⁰J. Y. Campbell, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-142, insists that *qahal adonai* is only a service of worship.

¹¹See G. Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 39, as opposed to E. R. Goodenough, *By Light Light*, p. 390.

¹²J. Y. Campbell, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-142.

¹³Studies on this subject are: H. H. Rowley, *The Biblical Doctrine of Election*; H. W. Robinson, *Inspiration and Revelation in the O.T.*, pp. 148-159. G. A. Danell, "The Idea of God's People in the Bible," in A. Fridrichsen, *The Root of the Vine*, pp. 23-26; and C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*, 1951, 96pp.

¹⁴The Jewish reply to this claim is surveyed by B. W. Helfgott, *The Doctrine of Election in Tannaitic Literature*, 1954, 209 pp.

¹⁵L. Koehler, *O.T. Theology*, 1953, pp. 60-74; E. Jacob, *Theology of the O.T.*, 1958, pp. 209-217.

¹⁶R. L. Hicks, "The Jewish Background of the N.T. Doctrine of the Church," *Anglican Theol. Review*, 30 (1948), pp. 107-117.

¹⁷T. H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, 1956, p. 4.

¹⁸G. A. Dannell, *op. cit.*, pp. 26, 32ff; E. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp. 323-324.

¹⁹T. H. Gaster, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

²⁰G. Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

²¹E. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-223.

²²R. L. Hicks, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-117.

²³On Synagogue Worship and organization see, W. O. E. Oesterley and G. H. Box, *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue* and G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, I, 281ff.

Ekklesia: A Word Study

Roy Bowen Ward

INTRODUCTION

Following the earthly ministry of Jesus, there arose an institution¹ in response to his person and his mission. This institution was a community of persons who sustained a certain relationship to Jesus Christ, and it existed by virtue of that relationship. The most common term used to describe this institution was *ekklesia*, which we translate, *church*.

To determine why this particular Greek word came to be chosen and how it was used is the purpose of this article. We shall attempt to see the history of the *ekklesia* and what it meant to the mind of Greeks and Jews across the Mediterranean world of the first cent., A.D., when this term was first applied to the new institution of Jesus Christ. We shall attempt to see the significance of this term and parallel expressions as they are used in the N.T. And we shall attempt to follow some developments in the understanding of this term in the history of the primitive church.²

GREEK BACKGROUND.

The most common classical usage of *ekklesia* and its cognates was as a political term, meaning an assembly of citizens. In the Greek city-state the citizens were called forth by the trumpet of the *kerux* (herald) summoning them to the *ekklesia* (assembly). The *ekklesia* was the ultimate power in the constitutional government of the Greek city-state, whether it was a monarchy, oligarchy, or democracy. Of the general assembly of the citizens in or before the time of Dracon (codified laws in 621 B.C.) nothing is really known—though the people must have had some power. Later Aristotle applied *ekklesiiai* to the Homeric assemblies of the people.³ Most of our references to the use of this word concern the *ekklesiiai* of Athens.⁴

The *ekklesia* in Athens enjoyed a long life from 508 B.C. until the early fourth century, A.D., in the time of Diocletian. But only from 508 to 322 B.C. was it a strictly democratic institution. In this time it was the general meeting of the people—all Athenian citizens could attend, excluding only aliens, females, and those disenfranchised (*atimoi*). What portion of the citizens actually attended we do not know, though Gomme suggests that 6,000 was perhaps one-seventh of the total in 431.⁵ A specially appointed council, the *Boule*, summoned the *ekklesia* and prepared its agenda. By law the *ekklesia* had to be summoned at least four times each 36 or 37 days, that is, forty times each year. One of each four meetings was more important than the others, this one being called the *ekklesia kuria*. The president of the *ekklesia* was a particular member of the *Boule* who

could serve as president at only one *ekklesia* in his lifetime. Any citizen might speak in debate and initiate amendments or administrative motions. Voting was normally by show of hands, a simple majority deciding most issues.⁶

It should be noted that in ordinary usage, *ekklesia* meant the assembly, and not the body of people involved. The *Boule* existed even when it was not actually in session, but there was a new *ekklesia* every time they assembled.⁷ The *demos* (people) assembled in an *ekklesia*, but when they acted, it was said to be the action of the *demos*, not the *ekklesia*.⁸

Further, it should be noted that the principal meaning of *ekklesia* is simply, "assembly." Lexicographers give as the primary meaning, "assembly duly summoned."⁹ But it is doubtful that in usage "duly summoned" was remembered. At Athens the extraordinary assemblies were called *sugkletei*, in distinction to the ordinary *ekklesiai* which met on fixed days.¹⁰

Finally, it should be noted that in classical usage *ekklesia* was, among Greek words for assembly, the most inclusive word in existence.¹¹ *Ekklesia*, being derived from the verb *ek-kaleo*, "to call out or forth," has often been interpreted as an exclusive term, connecting its etymological meaning with the Biblical doctrine that Christians are those "called out of the world by God."¹² However, F. J. A. Hort, in his classic work, *The Christian Ecclesia*, reminds us that in usage this exclusive meaning—a calling out from a larger group does—not have support.

There is no foundation for the widely spread notion that *ekklesia* means a people or a number of individual men called out of the world or mankind. . . . the compound verb *ekkaleo* is never so used, and *ekklesia* never occurs in a context which suggests this supposed sense to have been present in the writer's mind.¹³

In usage *ek-kaleo* meant only, "to call forth," and not, as this interpretation would require, "to call out from a larger group." *Ekklesia*, in turn, meant only "that which is called forth, an assembly." As Campbell comments, "as so often, etymology proves to be here misleading rather than helpful."¹⁴

In the Hellenistic period *ekklesia* retained its usual, classical meaning of an assembly of citizens. The *ekklesia* continued to be held in Athens, though not as the democratic institution it had once been, and the term is found in other settings with the same meaning.¹⁵

There are indications that in this period the term may have developed a certain quasi-technical significance, though this does not rule out widespread non-technical usage as simply an assembly. Deissman has pointed out that the Latin-speaking people of the West borrowed the term *ekklesia*, rather than translate it. This was not due to a scarcity of Latin words for assembly—*contio* and *comitia* were often translated into Greek by *ekklesia*. As examples Deissman cites

the letter of Pliny the Younger (61-113 A.D.) to Trajan in which the Latinized term, *ecclesia*, is used,¹⁶ and the bilingual inscription of the year 103/104 A.D. at Ephesus where *ekklesia* in the Greek half becomes *ecclesia* in the Latin half.¹⁷ Deissman concludes, "There must have been some special reason for borrowing the Greek word, and it lay doubtless in the subtle feeling that Latin possessed no word exactly equivalent to the Greek *ekklesia*."¹⁸ The reason may have been that a certain dignity had attached itself to this word due to its political context.

Finally we must note that *ekklesia* was never used in the Greek world as the *title* of a religious group. About the beginning of the first century, B.C., it is found used in connection with a society of Tyrian merchants and shipowners in Delos which worshipped Heracles.¹⁹ But here it is used only in its classical sense: the assembly or meeting of the society. It was fitting that the term should be used since these societies were modelled on that of the city-state.

JEWISH BACKGROUND.

Ekklesia occurs 80 times in the canonical books of the Septuagint translation (LXX) of the Old Testament, and where the Hebrew original is available for comparison,²⁰ it always translates *qahal* or words from the same root.²¹

Two important Hebrew words were used in the Old Testament to denote a gathering or assembly: *qahal* and '*edhah*. But when applied to Israel, '*edhah* came to indicate the society itself, whether assembled or not. In particular, '*edhah* is used of the children of Israel, whether assembled or not, during its journeying from Egypt to Canaan.²² Thus '*edhah* assumes quasi-technical status as the People of God, but *qahal* continues to denote only the actual assembly or meeting.

Though *ekklesia* is nearly always a translation of *qahal*, on the other hand, *qahal* is also translated by other Greek words, especially by *sunagoge*. In 35 passages *sunagoge* stands for *qahal*, 19 of these passages being in the first four books where *ekklesia* is never used. But though *sunagoge* does translate *qahal* in certain passages, it is usually the LXX translation of '*edhah*.

It is often asserted that the LXX added to the word *ekklesia* a religious connotation, the People of God, because of the association with the *qahal*, and especially with the *qahal YHWH* (the assembly of the LORD). Thus Johnson writes, "Knowledge of the LXX is vital for understanding its New Testament meaning. . . . It signifies the people met for religious ends, especially worship. . . ." ²³ Schmidt states,

That the *ekklesia* is the People of God, the Congregation of God, becomes clear first through the addition of *kuriou*: *ekklesia kuriou* = *qahal YHWH* . . . In the rest *ekklesia* without the addition is the Congregation of God . . . it must be regarded as a technical term.²⁴

J. Y. Campbell has taken exception to this idea: "It might therefore be expected that in the Septuagint *ekklesia* would acquire a

specifically religious connotation, but of this there is, in fact, no evidence whatever."²⁵

The critical point concerns the meaning of *qahal YHWH*, and the consequent acceptance of the position that *qahal* used alone stands for this full phrase. There are only five O.T. passages where *qahal YHWH* is used. The first two cases—Num. 16:3 and 20:4—may be discussed because the LXX translates these by *sunagoge*. In Deut. 23:2-4, 9, *qahal YHWH* is repeated five times, each time being translated by *ekklesia kuriou*. But here the context indicates that the phrase refers to an actual meeting, the assembly, not to the people itself.²⁶ In 1 Chron. 28:8 the *qahal YHWH* refers to an actual assembly at Jerusalem. In Hebrew this phrase is in apposition to "all Israel," but the reading in the LXX omits "Israel" and reads: "Now therefore before all the assembly of the LORD and in the hearing of God." In Micah 2:5 again there is no indication that it is more than the actual assembly to which the phrase refers; the expression *en ekklesiai* is quite classical.²⁷

If the Hebrew reading in 1 Chron. 28:8 is correct so that *qahal YHWH* is in apposition to Israel, then there may be a development in its meaning toward the People of God; yet the LXX does not understand it this way, omitting Israel and leaving *ekklesia* in its classical usage: the actual assembly. The scarcity of this phrase, *qahal YHWH*, the fact that it is not used of such significant assemblies as that which gathered at Sinai as described in Exodus, and the fact that where it is used an actual assembly can be pointed to diminishes the probable technical significance commonly alleged to it. Thus, even if the word, *qahal*, stood for the full phrase, it would still not add anything new to our understanding of the word nor its LXX counterpart, *ekklesia*. Furthermore, if *ekklesia* had come to mean, People of God, or Israel of God, through the Hebrew *qahal*, it is difficult to understand why N.T. writers do not use it as evidence when trying to prove that Christians are the People of God; Paul does not use it in Rom. 1-15, nor does Peter in 1 Pet. 2:4-10. There is no good evidence in the O.T. to show that *qahal* or *ekklesia* ever meant anything other than the actual assembly, be it a religious assembly (as in most cases), the assembly gathered when David slew Goliath, an assembly of prophets, etc.²⁸

In the non-canonical LXX books the usage of *ekklesia* is generally the same. An exception can be noted in certain of the twelve passages in Ecclesiasticus where *ekklesia* is used.²⁹ Campbell comments:

But in Ben Sira's book there is at least a suggestion that successive meetings of the same group of people are really the same *ekklesia*, not *ekklesiai*. . . . But if *ekklesia* is on the way to signify a regular meeting of a religious kind, there is still nothing to suggest that it has come to mean (as *sunagoge* did) the body of people who meet regularly in one particular place.³⁰

Philo (fl. A.D. 39) uses *ekklesia* 30 times: five as in classical Greek, and 25 in LXX quotations, especially from Deut. 23. He

sometimes qualifies *ekklesia* by an adjective: *theia*³¹ or *hiera*;³² and he also uses it with the genitives *theou*³³ and *kurion*.³⁴ In these passages there is still no evidence that the word alone (without descriptive adjectives or genitives) has a distinct religious connotation. On occasions he uses *sullogos* interchangeably with *ekklesia*, and he modifies this word by *hieros*.³⁵ There is one passage where Philo might have used *ekklesia* in a technical sense. "For when the whole multitude came together with harmonious oneness to give thanks for their migration, He no longer called them a multitude or a nation or a people but a 'congregation'."³⁶ Aucher's Latin translation has *Ecclesiam*.³⁷ But unfortunately all this is based on an Armenian version, and there is no real clue as to whether Philo used *ekklesia* or *sunagoge* or another word.³⁸ Philo's usage must be seen in the light of his own conception of the ideal state,³⁹ and therefore it is questionable as to whether he can be of major importance in the understanding of the common usage.

Josephus (37-c. 100 A.D.) uses *ekklesia* 48 times, all according to strict classical usage. 18 of these passages may represent LXX allusions, and in nine cases he substitutes *ekklesia* for *sunagoge*. Hort reminds us, "Josephus's ostentatious classicalism deprives us of the information which a better Jew in his position might have afforded us."⁴⁰

Conclusion. In the light of this study of the existing evidence concerning the pre-Christian history of *ekklesia*, the following may be noted: (1) *Ekklesia* meant an assembly. (2) It was familiar both to Gentiles by political usage and to Greek-speaking Jews through the LXX. (3) Its Greek history associated with it a certain dignity, with possible ideals of freedom and equal-membership playing a part. (4) It could be used of a religious assembly—Pagan or Jewish—but it did not become the title of any religious group, Pagan or Jewish. (5) Negatively, no evidence is found that in usage it meant "the called out"—despite etymology—nor that it came to mean "the People of God," nor that, in general, it was applied to any other than an individual assembly (though Ecclesiasticus shows a new trend: several assemblies being called the same *ekklesia*).

NEW TESTAMENT USAGE.

Ekklesia occurs 114 times in the New Testament,⁴¹ being found in Matt., Acts, Rom., 1 Cor., 2 Cor., Gal., Eph., Phil., Col., 1 Thess., 2 Thess., 1 Tim., Phile., Heb., James, 3 John, and Rev.⁴²

Its use, however, is somewhat different from that which we have seen generally in the pre-Christian history. Although *ekklesia* sometimes denotes merely an actual assembly, for the most part there is a real sense in which the *ekklesia* exists whether assembled or not. This is not a development which can be detected prior to Christian history, and the charge is probably to be explained strictly as a Christian phenomenon.

The hypothesis of J. Y. Campbell may well be true: "The probability is that at first they used it [*ekklesia*] as an obvious name for those simple 'meetings' which were the most conspicuous distinctive feature in the life of the early Church" ⁴³ The next step was the application of the term to the body of people habitually meeting together. Early Christians could have used *sunagoge*; James 2:2 seems to indicate that some did. Even Ignatius and Hermas later used it to denote the gathering of the church,⁴⁴ and Epiphanius states that the Ebionite Christians used *sunagoge* instead of *ekklesia*.⁴⁵ But *sunagoge* had by the first century, A.D., assumed too much of a technical status, denoting the religious assemblies of the Jews, these Jews themselves, and the places where they assembled. But *ekklesia* was not tied down to any group, much less to a religious group. Though used in the LXX, it was not distinctively Jewish; it was a term meaningful to Jew and Gentile alike. And, if Campbell's hypothesis is correct, then the primary use of *ekklesia* was local, its universal usage being secondary.

Acts. *Ekklesia* is used 23 times by the author of Acts. In two instances (19:32, 40) it refers to the mob of people at Ephesus. In this passage it is also used to refer to the assembly which met regularly (*ennomoi*) at Ephesus (19:39). Once *ekklesia* is used in the speech of Stephen (7:38) to designate the children of Israel gathered at Sinai, echoing perhaps Deut. 9:10 where the LXX has *ekklesia*.

In the remaining passages *ekklesia* refers in some sense to the institution of Jesus Christ. It comes closest to its classical usage in 14:27 where the assembly is actually gathered at Antioch to hear Paul and Barnabas. In the rest, *ekklesia* means more than the actual assembly; it is also the people who assemble. Thus "great fear came upon the whole church" in Jerusalem (5:11); there is a "great persecution of the church in Jerusalem" (8:1) and "Saul was laying waste the church, entering in house to house" (8:3).

In every case, with one possible exception, *ekklesia* is explicitly or implicitly used in a local sense: it is the assembly (assembled or not) at Jerusalem (11:22; 12:1, 5; 15:4, 22), at Antioch (11:26; 13:1; 14:27; 15:3), at Cæsarea (18:22), and at Ephesus (20:17, 28). This local use is emphasized by the use of the plural, *ekklesiai*, when referring to churches in a larger area: in Syria and Cilicia (15:41) and in areas of Asia Minor (16:4). The one possible exception to the local use is the statement in 9:31: "So then the Church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, having been strengthened." But even here there is good textual evidence for the plural, rather than the singular.⁴⁶

In this possible exception (and a textual variant of 15:41 which has the singular) there is the beginning of another development in the meaning of *ekklesia*: the universal usage. If the singular read-

ing is correct, and *ekklesia* is used in a universal sense, then we have the local and universal usage here side by side (as also in Paul). But Schmidt rightly points out that there is no indication that the *ekklesia* is divided into *ekklesiai*, or vice versa. "It is rather that if the *ekklesia* is found in a certain place, even through the mention of *ekklesiai* by the side of it, it can not be affected by this."⁴⁷ Thus, in this development, *ekklesia* can mean any portion of Christians: from a local group to those in a larger geographical area, and, by extension, to those throughout the world.

Pauline Epistles. *Ekklesia* is used 62 times in the Pauline epistles.

In Paul's first letter to Corinth he uses *ekklesia* several times according to common usage, denoting an actual assembly: "For first when you have come together in an assembly, I hear there are divisions among you" (11:18; see also 14:19, 28, 35). But in most cases the reference is to the institution, assembled or not; *ekklesia* has become a technical term.

The *ekklesia* is often local: the church at Cenchreæ (Rom. 16:1), at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1), at Laodicea (Col. 4:16), and at Thessalonica (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1). When speaking of a larger geographical area Paul uses the plural: the churches of Asia (1 Cor. 16:19), of Galatia (1 Cor. 16:1; Gal. 1:1), of Macedonia (2 Cor. 8:1), of Judea (Gal. 1:22; 1 Thess. 2:14). Paul also uses *ekklesia* of smaller groups, such as the household church of Prisca and Aquila in Rome (Rom. 16:5), that of the same couple in Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:19), that of Nympha in Laodicea (Col. 4:15) and that of Philemon in Colosse (Phile. 2). These can evidently be called *ekklesia*, even while calling the total group in the city *ekklesia*.

Only once did the author of Acts add a descriptive genitive to *ekklesia*, and that (in reference to the church at Ephesus) was a quotation from the Psalms: "the church of the Lord" (Acts 20:28). But Paul often adds a descriptive genitive, usually *tou theou* (of God). Twice he adds *tou Christou* (of Christ), once *ton ethnon* (of the Gentiles), and once *ton hagion* (of the saints). The salutations of the Thessalonian correspondence are particularly descriptive: "to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and in our Lord Jesus Christ." Even when Paul does not use a descriptive genitive, it is usually to be understood, in accordance with Paul's doctrine of the *ekklesia* (see *infra*). It should be noted that *tou theou* is used with the singular, *ekklesia*, in reference to a local church. Paul addresses "the church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Cor. 1:2). Paul does not mean that the church of God is limited to Corinth, nor does he say, "the church of God, that part of which is at Corinth." As Schmidt rightly points out, "the Church is not primarily an accumulation of individual congregations of the whole community, but every congregation of the whole community, however small, represents the Church."⁴⁸

It is in Paul's letters to the Ephesians and Colossians that *ekklesia* receives its fullest doctrinal expression, and at the same time is removed the furthest from the classical usage. Already *ekklesia* has been used to designate the people, whether assembled or not. But in most cases the use was still local; these people could and were actually assembling. But in Eph. and Col. *ekklesia* is used of the people without respect to the possibility of actually assembling.

Ekklesia was already a technical term for the institution of Jesus Christ. But the term itself was rather neutral—not particularly expressive of the doctrine concerning that institution. Especially here in Eph. and Col. *ekklesia* is grounded into the doctrine of the institution and made to carry in itself the doctrinal implications. Paul's device for accomplishing this is the use of two important parallel terms, *some* (body) and *gune* (wife). By these terms Paul clearly shows the intrinsic connection of Jesus Christ and his institution (*ekklesia*)—it is like head and body (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:24), like husband and wife (Eph. 5:21-33). In these terms Christ and the *ekklesia* become almost identified. Christ is the head of the body, but the body is not just a rump—it is “the fullness (*pleroma*) of him who fills all in all” (Eph. 1:22). Christ and *ekklesia* are like husband and wife, but he adds, “the two shall become *one* flesh” (Eph. 5:31).

Here one does not need to add *tou Christou* to *ekklesia*, for in the term itself must now be included Christ as an essential connotation. Again the comments of Schmidt are well stated:

... the *ekklesia* as the *soma Christou* is not a mere association of men . . . Definitive is the communion with Christ. To sharpen this point one could say: A single man can and must be the *ekklesia*, if he has communion with Christ.⁴⁹

This being so, the classical meaning of “assembly,” “gathering” has been superseded by the more dynamic, Pauline definition: *ekklesia* = body of Christ, or even, Christ himself!

This usage of *ekklesia* in Eph. and Col., although non-local and related emphatically to Jesus Christ, does not remove it from reality. There is no “invisible” *ekklesia* here, as distinguished from the “visible” one. That Paul calls this institution “holy,” etc. (Eph. 5:27), does not remove it from reality; those who compose the *ekklesia* are exhorted to be “holy” (Rom. 12:1; etc.) and are, indeed, called “holy” (*hagioi*: saints—Rom. 1:7; etc.). In Eph. 3:10 mention is made of the mission of the *ekklesia*, but this is a real and earthly mission.

Other N. T. Books. In the other N.T. books, excluding the gospels, *ekklesia* is used 26 times. It is found 20 times in the Revelation, always in the local sense, referring to the seven churches of Asia. James and III John also use it in a local sense (Jas. 5:14; III John 6, 9, 10.). Once in Hebrews (2:12) it is used in a quotation from Psalms 22:22 where *ekklesia* simply stands for *qahal*. The only passage where *ekklesia* stands for a heavenly institution is in Heb.

12:23. But here it is probably not used according to its N.T. technical usage, but simply in its common meaning: an actual assembly. It is here coupled with *paneguris*, which the RSV translates, "festal gathering."

Gospels. *Ekklesia* by name is found in only one of the four gospels, Matthew, and in only two passages in that gospel (16:18; 18:17). This argument from statistics is often the first argument put forward in attempts to disassociate Jesus from the *ekklesia*. However, this question involves not only the word *ekklesia* but also the thing itself. Recent scholarship⁵⁰ has shown the *ekklesia* (without name) to be an integral part of the teaching of Jesus.⁵¹ The question remains as to why *ekklesia* by name is scarcely used in the gospels. This term seems to be generally reserved for the time *after* the resurrection-ascension of Jesus as the Christ. Note, for instance, that in Luke-Acts *ekklesia* never occurs until after the events of Pentecost. There is an understanding that *ekklesia* is, strictly speaking, a post-resurrection institution.

Matt. 18:17. The two occasions of *ekklesia* in this passage must be understood in its common usage: an actual assembly (so translated in RSV). And that assembly is, no doubt, present rather than future, Jewish rather than Christian. Hort states, "The actual precept is hardly intelligible if the *ekklesia* meant is not the Jewish community, apparently the Jewish local community, to which the injured person and the offender both belonged."⁵² But Hort also says, "The principle holds good in a manner for all time,"⁵³ and thus this passage found application in the church.⁵⁴

Matt. 16:18. Although many problems have been raised concerning this passage,⁵⁵ the scope of this study limits us to the question of the usage of *ekklesia* as it here stands, and to the question of what precisely did it mean. The problem is a perplexing one, if our survey of the pre-Christian history of *ekklesia* is correct. If *ekklesia* meant only an actual assembly up until Christian usage converted it into a technical, religious term, then the statement here: "Upon this rock I will build my 'meeting' (*ekklesia*)" does not make much sense.

(1) There are several possibilities that Jesus spoke Greek, using this Greek word, (*ekklesia*), and that it did have a significant meaning.

(a) It is possible that *ekklesia* had attained a religious connotation prior to this time in some may not traceable in the sources we have. This word might have been capable of meaning assembly in a more universal sense, with religious overtones: the People of God. If such is true, *ekklesia* fits well the context: "I will build *my* People of God, i.e., the new Israel."

This view is, of course, the prevalent consensus of most commentators: that *ekklesia* had a religious connotation. But they seek evi-

dence for this view from the LXX, where a closer investigation reveals no such evidence. The development, if true, must lie elsewhere.

But it is difficult to support even this hypothesis in the face of the failure of N.T. writers to employ this term in proving that this new institution is the People of God, the new Israel. If it had developed this connotation in a Jewish *milieu*, surely Paul and Peter would have used it (Rom. 1-15; 1 Pet. 2:4-10). Usage in Acts and elsewhere also stands against this view.

(b) A second possibility is that Jesus himself gave to the term *ekklesia* its new significance, either on this occasion, or elsewhere in his ministry. A definition of *ekklesia* in Messianic terms would give it the depth of meaning expected in this passage. The juxtaposition of *ekklesia* and *basileia* in the following verse might suggest that such a definition was made by Jesus. However, this hypothesis is weak in that this definition is nowhere to be found, either here or in any passage in the gospels. Would such an important definition be omitted? Usage in Acts and elsewhere oppose this view also.

(c) A third possibility is that in using *ekklesia*, Jesus used a synonym for *sunagoge*, using it in antithesis to this Jewish institution of his day, and borrowing by association the connotations of *sunagoge*. *Sunagoge* would fit this passage well, since it was a technical term denoting the Congregation of God. It even referred to the building where the Congregation met, and the figure of "building" would be quite aptly associated with *sunagoge*. But Jesus could not use *sunagoge* because of its Jewish limitations.⁵⁶ Then he used a synonym in the way that he might have used *sunagoge*, and the connotations would thus be transferred to *ekklesia*. This hypothesis is possible, but probably is a bit too clever to be true!

(2) If we dismiss these hypotheses, we are left with one other possibility which seems, indeed, more convincing. This possibility is that Jesus did not say, "*ekklesia*," but rather the equivalent in the Aramaic language.⁵⁷

The possible Aramaic equivalents include: *gehala'*, *'edhta'*, *ciburra'*, and *kenishta'*. With all four of these words is associated the idea of the People of God. *'edhata'* may be ruled out since it does not occur in the Targums. Of the other three, the most common term was *kenishta'*: gathering, assembly, place of meeting (synagogue); this term was also applied to the Great Synagogue.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the Sinaitic Syriac version (3rd century, A.D.) uses *kenushta'* regularly for *ekklesia* and *sunagoge* (though Matt. 16:18 is not extant in this version), and the Palestinian Syriac version (*Evangelium Hierosolymitanum*—no precise date) also uses *kenushta'* for both Greek words. Of this latter version Schmidt, following E. Nestle, states, "The dialect of *Evangelium Hierosolymitanum* differs considerably from the ordinary Syriac, and it possibly stands relatively close to the language of Jesus and his disciples."⁵⁹ Schmidt, McNeil,⁶⁰ etc., therefore prefer *kenishta'* as the original.

Whether it was *kenishta*' or one of the other available words, it would be meaningful here in this passage. Each would convey the idea of the People of God, an idea fully in keeping with the figure of "building,"⁶¹ and each would be a term with Messianic overtones, in keeping with the *basileia* in the following verse. When Matthew later recorded his gospel in Greek, *ekklesia* would be the natural and only possible translation of the Aramaic. *Sunagoge* would have been eliminated as being a limited, Jewish term. But by Matthew's time *ekklesia* was the technical, religious term in usage to designate what Jesus earlier promised to build. For Matthew's readers *ekklesia* was natural and meaningful.

APOSTOLIC FATHERS.

Ekklesia in Matt. 16:18, in Paul's doctrinal expositions, etc., is used in a general or universal sense. Elsewhere the majority of instances are of local usage. This local usage continues in the literature of the Apostolic Fathers. I Clement is a letter from the *ekklesia* of God sojourning at Rome to the *ekklesia* of God sojourning at Corinth. Ignatius begins his letters in a similar way, as also Polycarp, and the Martyrdom of Polycarp from the church in Smyrna. *Didache*⁶² and the *Shepherd of Hermas*⁶³ also know this local use.

There is, however, an increasing tendency to use *ekklesia* in referring to the church universal. This is explicit when Ignatius adds to *ekklesia* the adjective, *katholike*⁶⁴ (general or universal⁶⁵), which later becomes a technical term: the Catholic Church. The universal idea is even more emphatic in the Martyrdom of Polycarp where the universal *ekklesia* is in the *oikoumene* (the whole habitable world, i.e., ecumenical).⁶⁶

The *ekklesia* appears in the visions of the *Shepherd of Hermas* as a holy, ancient Lady,⁶⁷ and as a Tower.⁶⁸ This Church is cleansed and purified, and after the wicked are cast out, she is one body, one understanding, one mind, one faith, one love. This unity of the church is found in Ignatius where God, Christ, and Church form a single entity,⁶⁹ which is in connection with the church officers: "without these [deacons, bishop, presbyters] it is not called a church."⁷⁰

II Clement, so-called, describes the *ekklesia* as pre-existent, the "*ekklesia* of life," spiritual, but made flesh—as the Logos.⁷¹ Though the words have a Pauline sound, the tendency here is better described as a Gnostic development⁷² or the Semitic belief of the pre-existence of certain things, such as the tabernacle.⁷³

SUMMARY.

The pre-Christian history of the *ekklesia*⁷⁴ presented the new institution of Jesus Christ with an easily adaptable word to describe that institution. At first it was a neutral term, devoid of any special doctrinal significance. But this word which meant "assembly" now included the people who assembled, whether actually in an as-

sembly or not. This assembly was something real; thus the first and most common usage was of a local church, i.e., where there was actually an assembling of the people. This usage is typical of Acts, of much of the Pauline epistles, of the general epistles, of the Revelation to John, and of many of the passages in the Apostolic Fathers. It had become in most of these passages the technical term to designate this new institution.

Alongside of this usage there developed a wider, non-local use. The church, after spreading out from Jerusalem, was still in all these places that one and the same institution of Jesus Christ. But the Greek word *ekklesia* did not readily lend itself to this non-local usage. Thus we often have the plural, *ekklesiai*, when speaking of a larger geographic area. But, perhaps in order to emphasize the oneness of these *ekklesiai*, the singular, *ekklesia*, came to be used. In this usage the idea of assembly was no longer prominent. In Eph. and Col. we have this non-local usage. The difference of usage by Paul in Eph. and Col. as contrasted with his other letters must be explained as a grounding of this term *ekklesia* (which had become the technical term for the institution) in the basic doctrines of the Faith (especially in Christology), which were already integral parts of the concept of the church.

The concept of the church began with Jesus Christ, though he may not have used the Greek word, *ekklesia*. When *ekklesia* was used, it became what it was because of Jesus Christ; for it became the technical term of that institution which assembled in his name, and which was composed of people who sustained a certain relationship to him, i.e., people "in Christ."

APPENDIX: ETYMOLOGY OF "CHURCH."

Most scholars are agreed that "church" is derived from the Greek *kuriakon*, an adjective (of the Lord). This adjective is used in the N.T. with *deipnon* (Lord's Supper—1 Cor. 11:20) and *hemera* (Lord's Day—Rev. 1:10). It was also used with *doma* (the Lord's house) in the early church, and from the third century, at least, it began to be used substantively as the *place* of worship.⁵ From this usage it passed into the Gothic languages through the barbaric invasions, probably as *kirika*. From this comes the English *church*, the Scottish *kirk*, the German *Kirche*, and other modern language derivations, including Slavonic forms.⁶ *Ekklesia* lies behind such modern terms for church as the French *eglise*, the Spanish *iglesia*, the Portuguese *igreja*, etc. English words from this root include *Ecclesiastes*, *ecclesiastical*, etc.

⁵This term is used advisedly, though criticized by Emil Brunner, *The Misunderstanding of the Church* (Translation by H. Knight, London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), p. 10, etc.

⁶For an important bibliography see O. Linton, *Das Problem der Urkirche in der neueren Forschung* (Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift, 1932); for more recent additions to this bibliography see W. Arndt

and F. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957).

³*Politics* 1285a 11.

⁴See references in Thuc., Herod., Aristoph., Plato., Arist., and in inscriptions and other non-literary sources.

⁵A. W. Gomme, "Ecclesia," *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p. 304.

⁶For further discussions see short article by Gomme, *op. cit.*, pp. 303, 304; and fuller presentations in C. G. Brandis, "Ekklesia," *Pauly's Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, revised by Wissowa, (1905), vol. 5, cols. 2163-2200; R. Whiston and W. Wayte, "Ecclesia," *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquity*, vol. 1, pp. 697-703.

⁷See Thuc. 3.46: *en tei proterai ekklesiai* (in the earlier assembly); inscription in Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, vol. 3, p. 101: *en tei deuterai ton ekklesion* (in the second of the assemblies).

⁸See the prescription of an Athenian assembly in Dittenberger, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 512: *prosetaxen ho demos* . . . (the people commanded); vol. 1, p. 731: *psephisma tou demos* (the vote of the people).

⁹Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Jones-McKenzie edition), *s.v.*

¹⁰See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1275b 8.

¹¹See E. L. Hicks, "On Some Political Terms Employed in the New Testament," *Classical Review*, 1 (1887), p. 43. Moulton and Milligan cite as a non-literary example of the "inclusive" use of *ekklesia* the assembly at Apamea: *agomenes pandemou ekklesias* (being gathered in the assembly of all the people). *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*, *s.v.*

¹²This doctrine is substantiated apart from etymology by such passages as: John 15:19; 17:6; etc., and by those passages dealing with "calling," "election," etc.

¹³F. J. A. Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1898), p. 5.

¹⁴J. Y. Campbell, "The Origin and Meaning of the Christian Use of the Word EKKLESIA," *Journal of Theological Studies*, 49 (1948), p. 131.

¹⁵The historian Polybius (c. 202-120 B.C.) tells of an *ekklesia* in Sparta, which was the gathering of the people to hear Machatas. *History*, iv. 34.6.

Plutarch (c.46-c.120 A.D.) uses this term to describe the assemblies before which Tiberias stood. *Tiberias Gracchus*, 14-16.

Lucian (c.115-200 A.D.), in his parody, *Parliament of the Gods*, calls this meeting a *sumposium* and a *sunedrion*. But when the official motion is presented, the meeting is then called an *ekklesias ennomu* and the decree follows the formula of fourth cent. Athens. 1, 3, 14.

¹⁶Epistle x. 111. *bule et ecclesia consentiente*.

¹⁷*hina tithentai kat' ekklesian en to theatro epi ton baseon/ita ut [om]n[i e]cclesia supra bases ponerentur*.

¹⁸A. Deissmann, *Light From the Ancient East* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1927), p. 113.

¹⁹*Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, 2271. See discussion in F. Poland, *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1909), p. 332.

²⁰I Sam. 19:20 - *lahaqah*; Neh. 5:7 - *qehilah*; Ps. 26:12 - *maqhelim*; Ps. 67:26 - *maghiloth*. "In the case of *lahaqah* it is the same radicles in another sequence; either here it is supposed to be a derived word from *qahal*, or else it is possibly a case of dittography,

occurring here so close to *laqahath*." K. L. Schmidt, "*Kaleo . . .*" *Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 3, pp. 530, 531. See English translation by J. R. Coates in *Bible Key Words* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1951).

²¹In three instances no Hebrew word stands behind the use of *ekklesia* in the LXX: Deut. 4:10; I Chr. 28:2; II Chr. 10:3.

²²Five-sixths of the total occurrences of 'edhah in the O.T. are in the four books of Ex., Lev., Num., and Jos.—more than one-half are in the book of Num. alone.

²³G. Johnston, *The Doctrine of the Church in the New Testament* (Cambridge: University Press, 1943), pp. 36, 37.

²⁴Schmidt, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 531.

²⁵Campbell, *op. cit.*, pp. 132, 133.

²⁶In Neh. 13:1 the phrase *qahal 'elohim* occurs, but this is a reference to the assembly in Deut. 23.

²⁷Lam. 1:10 may be a further reference, *ekklesia sou* here probably referring to the assembly in Deut. 23.

²⁸The most recent discussion of the *qahal YHWH* is to be found in Johan D. W. Kritzinger, *Qahal Jahwe. Wat dit is en wie daaraan mag behoort* (Acad. Proefschrift, Kampen: Kok, 1957), and in the review of this work by L. Rost in *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, (1958), pp. 266, 267.

The summary of Kritzinger's work is written in English. In summarizing chapter 1, paragraph 3: The use and meaning of *qahal* (YHWH) in the O.T., he states: "*Qahal* primarily means 'gathering' or 'assembly.' This general meaning is found throughout the O.T." (p. 152) He cites one text where *qahal* is used as a technical term for the cult-assembly, but this text—Num. 15:15—is one that is translated by *sunagoge*, not *ekklesia*.

²⁹Ecclesiasticus 15:15; 21:17; 23:24; 24:2; 26:5; 31:11; 33:19; 38:33; 39:10; 44:15; 50:13, 20.

³⁰Campbell, *op. cit.*, pp. 137, 138.

³¹*De Confusione Linguarum*, 144.

³²*Quod Deus immutabilis sit*, 111; *De Migratione Abrahami*, 69; *De Somniis*, ii, 184, 187.

³³*Legum Allegoria*, iii, 8.

³⁴*De Ebrietate*, 213.

³⁵*Legum Allegoria*, iii, 81; *De Somniis*, ii, 184; *De Specialibus Legibus*, i, 325.

³⁶*Quaestiones et Solutiones in Exodum*, 1.10, translated by Ralph Marcus in the Loeb Classical Library, supplement to Philo series, vol. 2, pp. 19, 20.

³⁷Philo Judaeus, *Paralipomena Armena* (Armenian text and Latin translation by P. Aucher, 1826), p. 456.

³⁸The word in question is *zhoghov*. Although the Armenian language has a word derived from *ekklesia*—*ekghetsi*—here this word is related to *zhoghvoort*, the usual translation of *sunagoge*! Aucher's Latin translation is here misleading as far as indicating what Greek word stood originally in the text. See M. Bedrossian, *New Dictionary—Armenian-English* (Venice: S. Lazarus Armenian Academy, 1875-79), s.v.

³⁹See H. A. Wolfson, *Philo* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947), vol. 2, chap. 13, especially pp. 374-395.

⁴⁰Hort, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁴¹Acts 2:47 may be another example of the use of *ekklesia*, but

textual evidence is not strong for it. K. Lake and H. Cadbury, in *The Beginnings of Christianity* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1933), vol. 4., p. 30, argue for *epi to auto*, to which the Western text added *en tei ekklesiai*. The Antiochian text then dropped *en*, moved *epi to auto* to the next sentence, and read, "added to the church" Whether *ekklesia* is present in name or not, the thing itself is—the corporation of the saved. *Ekklesia* is supported by D, Pesh, P, S, 462. *Epi to auto* is supported by B, Aleph, A, C, 81, Vg, Sah, etc.

⁴²The ten books in which *ekklesia* is not found do not present great problems. Schmidt's comment is sound: "That it is missing in 1 J and 2 J should not be very surprising since, indeed, it appears in 3 J. Likewise it is not in 2 Tm and Tt, while it appears in 1 Tm. When so small a letter as Jd does not have the word, we must here reckon it with the accident of statistics. On the other hand the non-appearance of the word in 1 Pt and 2 Pt is extra-ordinary. But since in 1 Pt, in a special, emphatic way, the essence and meaning of the O.T. community is spoken of directly, with the use of O.T. expressions, thus the question emerges whether it is the thing or the word that is missing." *op. cit.*, vol. 31, p. 505. This last comment is true also of Mark, Luke and John.

⁴³Campbell, *op. cit.*, pp. 141, 142.

⁴⁴*To Polycarp* 4:2 - *puknoteron sunagogai ginesthosan* (Let the "gatherings" be more frequent); *Mandate* 11:9, 13, 14 - *eis sunagogen andron dikaion* (into the "assembly" of the righteous men).

⁴⁵*Against Heresies* xxx. 18 - *sunagogen de outoi kalousi ten heauton ekklesian, kai ouchi ekkesian* (and these call their church a synagogue, and not an *ekklesia*).

⁴⁶The support for *ekklesiai* is to be found in the Antiochian text, which may preserve the Western text which is somewhat defective here. The plural is supported by H, L, P, S.

⁴⁷Schmidt, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 506.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 508.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 515.

⁵⁰See R. Newton Flew, *Jesus and His Church* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1938); Schmidt, *op. cit.*; Johnston, *op. cit.*; Anders Nygren, *Christ and His Church* (translation by Carlsten, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956); and various works connected with the ecumenical movement.

⁵¹Such indications are to be found in his teaching concerning discipleship, which is certainly a preparation for the founding of the *ekklesia*. There are synonyms, such as *poimne* (flock) in Matt. 26: 31 and John 10:1 (cf. I Cor. 9:7); *poimnion* (little flock) in Luke 12:32 (cf. Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2f.); etc. The Gospel according to John, though never using *ekklesia* by name, obviously speaks of the church; especially note the similarity of the vine and the branches in John 15:1 with the Pauline doctrine of the *ekklesia*. See C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1955), p. 393, etc.; also see O. Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship* (translation by Todd and Torrance, London: SCM Press, 1953), pp. 37ff.

And certainly Jesus taught about and preached the Kingdom of God. When the modern antithesis between Kingdom and church is removed, the *ekklesia* is seen as a realization of this teaching. This is not to say that *ekklesia* exhausts the meaning of *basileia tou theou* (the sovereignty or reign of God). Flew states: "The *Basileia* creates a community, and uses a community as an instrument. Those who enter the *Basileia* are in the Ecclesia; the Ecclesia lives beneath the Kingly Rule of God, acknowledges it, proclaims it, and looks for its final manifestation; but the Ecclesia is not itself the *Basileia*." *op. cit.*, p. 126.

⁵²Hort, *op. cit.*, p. 10. There are Jewish parallels to this passage, such as that in the recently discovered Manual of Discipline (vi.1) from Qumran.

⁵³*Idem.*

⁵⁴Didache 15 (2nd cent. A.D.) seems to allude to this passage; the Apostolic Constitution, 38 (4th cent. A.D.) quotes it in direct application to the church.

⁵⁵Questions are raised as to the genuineness of this statement as coming from Jesus, the possibility of a different context other than the Caesarea Philippi scene, the relationship of the church and Peter, the possibility of successors to Peter and this promise, etc. See Cullmann, *Peter* (translation by F. V. Filson, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953) and other references.

⁵⁶Other possible words (*laos* - people; *sunedrion* - council; etc.) were likewise limited in general by Jewish usage.

⁵⁷That Jesus himself spoke Aramaic is suggested by the fact that this was the common language of Palestinian Jews of his day. Metzger states, "In common with his Palestinian contemporaries Jesus undoubtedly spoke Aramaic as his mother tongue, but being a Galilean he very likely was able to use Greek as well. One would expect that most of his teaching to the common people of Palestine would be given in Aramaic." "The Language of the New Testament," *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 7, p. 52. This is substantiated by the Aramaic words preserved in our Greek gospels: *talitha cumi* (Mark 5: 41), *ephphata* (Mark 7:34) *abba* (Mark 14:36), and *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani* (Mark 15:34; cf. Matt. 27:46). Metzger further points to the fact that several sayings of Jesus, when translated into Aramaic, involve puns—an unlikely circumstance unless the puns were original. One such pun is to be found in this passage—the play on "rock." See the discussion by Metzger, *ibid.*, p. 53.

⁵⁸See references in Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Talmud*, s.v.

⁵⁹Schmidt, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 529.

⁶⁰A. H. McNeil, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1915), *ad loc.* Note the discussion in Johnston, *op. cit.*, pp. 37ff, 48ff.

⁶¹See Cullman, *Peter*, p. 188, and references.

⁶²9.4.

⁶³*Vision* ii.2.6; ii.4.3; iii.9.7.

⁶⁴*To the Smyrneans*, 8.1.

⁶⁵Schmidt takes this to mean "one and only" here, rather than "universal," *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 536.

⁶⁶8.1 - *pases tes kata ten oikoumenen katholikes ekklesias* (all the universal church throughout the whole world); also 19.2.

⁶⁷*Vision* i.1.6; ii.4.1; iv.1.3; etc.

⁶⁸*Vision* iii.3.3; *Sim.* ix.1.2; ix.13.1; etc.

⁶⁹*To the Philadelphians*, 3.2.

⁷⁰*To the Trallians*, 3.1 - *choris touton ekklesia ou kaleitai.*

⁷¹14.1ff.

⁷²See Schmidt, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 537.

⁷³See Wolfson, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 182f.

⁷⁴See *supra*, p. 10.

⁷⁵Cf. *Apostolic Constitutions* II. 59; an edict of Maximinus (303-313 A.D.) in Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, ix. 10; canon 15 of the Council of Ancyra (314); canon 5 of the Council of Neo-Caesarea (314-323); canon 28 of the council of Laodicea.

⁷⁶See article "Church," *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (edited by J. H. Murray, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893), vol. 2, pp. 402, 406.

DOCTRINAL

The Identity of the New Testament Church

W. B. Barton

This paper will deal with the question of the Identity of the New Testament Church. This is an important question; upon it the Restoration Plea depends. If there were no such thing as the church in those times with certain identifying characteristics, then it becomes absurd, of course, to suggest that the solution to the disunity in the Christian world today would be a return to those most primitive times. It has in fact even been suggested by one that such a return is impossible for this very reason. It is generally conceded among certain theologians of our time that there was such a variation among the differing congregations of the first century that it would be impossible to find any *distinctive* form of the church. That, in fact, such a *form* not only is impossible to discern in the texts that have come down to us, but that such a *form* was never intended to exist.

Of course, we must first of all understand what we will mean by a "form" throughout this paper. Ordinarily in theological treatises on the subject of the church, *form* usually deals with the outward organization of the church, whether it is episcopal, presbyterian, congregational and that sort of thing. However, it is possible that one of the reasons why the true nature of the church is not perceived is that we do not make proper distinctions. One of the grandest themes to be found in the epistles of Paul the Apostle is the concept of *soma Christou* (the body of Christ). By this phrase this holy writer meant, not simply the physical body that was crucified nor that glorified body which was raised from the tomb on that most auspicious Sunday morning, but *the church* as well. In the mind of the Apostle Paul when he thought of the church of which he was privileged to be a member and in which he functioned as an apostle and an ambassador of Jesus Christ the Savior, he thought of it as a group of people so intimately related together in one spirit and sharing one faith, the faith of Jesus Christ, that he sets forth the figure of *the body of Christ* as that most adequate to depict this grand relationship. Christ himself was *the head*, the church is the body of Christ. This is an important figure and I think it is central for an understanding of what we want to really mean when we speak of the *form* of the New Testament church. It is a most important theme if we are to understand what the diversities among the churches of the first century meant, if there is to be any historical ground to our belief in the existence of the first century church.

It goes without saying that the earliest church on record was not an *amorphus body*. There were apostles present¹ and when a difficulty arose over the distribution of the goods held in common by the members of the congregation a board of seven men was appointed to look after this material business, in order that the apostles might spend their time with the preaching and teaching of the word.² We see from this that a practical need dictated the appointment of this board. It was certainly the *church* or the *body of Christ* before the seven men were appointed. There is good evidence that wherever the apostles established a church in Judea or elsewhere the members were especially blessed with charismata, spiritual gifts, and yet, apparently it was possible for a church to exist without these. When Philip went up to Samaria, a saved assembly of people resulted from his preaching, who had no spiritual gifts until the apostles came from Jerusalem.³ When the Apostle Paul and Barnabas in their first missionary journey preached in Asia Minor, churches of the Lord existed before they were organized under the rule of local elders. Notice the text tells us "they ordained them elders in every church,"⁴ on their way back. It is possible, therefore, for us to conclude that the church could exist in the New Testament times without the presence of elders. There is also some indication that an evangelist was not absolutely necessary for the existence of the church. However, the presence of Titus in Crete made possible the setting in order of things that were wanting, such as the ordaining of elders and deacons.⁵ But the church in Crete apparently existed before it was ruled over by elders. These few points are enough to establish that essentially *the church does not consist in outward forms* alone, though necessary these may be for its proper functioning.

We must, therefore, make a distinction between what is the *essential form* of a thing and its *accidental forms*. The *essential form* has to do with what makes a thing, whatever it might be, to be just what it is and not some other; whereas the *accidental forms* depend on what is essential for their existence. For example, it seems that every single kind of being must have some essential nature which distinguishes it from every other kind of being and without which it just simply would not be what it is at all. The old definition of man as "a featherless biped" misses the point. These are accidental characteristics of man. A man may lose one leg and still be a man. In defining a man the ancients knew that you had to take into account his *essential nature* and so they said that "man is a rational animal," for this distinguishes him from all the other members of the animal kingdom. Man is *rational*, this is his essential characteristic, all other things you say about a man depend on this essential nature. All definition has been based on this recognition and there is no reason why such a distinction cannot be used when we speak of religious matters. If we identify the church by *some accidental form* and make this the distinguishing characteristic then it

is as much to say that the church cannot possibly exist without it, yet this, as we have seen from the few examples noted above, is just simply not true.

But, on the other hand, this is not to argue that those forms which are merely accidental to it are not important for its *proper functioning*. They may well be. "A rose by any other name might smell as sweet," but it's not likely that we would identify a thing as a rose if it smelled like vinegar and looked like a pineapple. Here the ancients made one further distinction that's worth remembering between the *property* of a thing and its *accident*. They chose to call that a *property* that seemed to *follow of necessity* from the understanding of the essential nature of a subject. That "man has a nervous system" refers to such a property. This they called a *generic property*. They further divided property into *specific* and *individual*. The statement, "man is a tool-making animal," refers to a *specific property*. That Alexander Campbell was born on Sept. 12, 1788 or June, 1786, County Antrim, Ireland, refers to an *individual property*. While a property is an attribute which is peculiar to a subject it is not obviously a part of its very essence. And so for this reason, we wouldn't ordinarily include this in the definition of the thing. But notice that it is commensurate with the subject itself so that the subject just can't be thought of as functioning properly without these kinds of properties. An *accident*, on the other hand, is an attribute which has *no necessary connection* with the understanding of the essential nature of a thing. In other words, it is not included in the essence of the thing. It is an attribute which may or may not belong to a subject. When we say "a man is virtuous," for instance, it isn't essential to the nature of man to so be, for there are so few virtuous men. This is an accident. Let us then for convenience divide what we have been calling accidental forms into properties and accidents. By making this distinction, perhaps, along with recognizing that every single being has an essential form in which both properties and accidents inhere we will be better able to understand the essential nature or form of the church, its essential properties necessary for it to function adequately and what are mere accidents which it may and may not have. After all, such a distinction is merely using our heads to understand anything and these distinctions can be found in any good textbook on logic.

It will help us see the inadequacy of such a statement as the following: "The New Testament says nothing about the form this church should assume in human society in which it exists. We are not told in which way the church should be the same or different from other groups and associations. In matters of church order we find great variations between the different communities mentioned."⁶ This quote is taken from one of the outstanding Protestant theologians and probably represents the opinion of many. He has followed the lead of Karl Holl, who seemingly based his conclusions on

the fact that the Jerusalem churches and the churches established by Paul were very different in some respects. This has led a man like Garrison to suggest that there was no church in New Testament times that can be restored.⁷ Since such considerations do strike at the very heart of the great Restoration Plea, it is necessary that we take account of them and make a careful study of the relevant texts.

First of all, let us admit that there were variations and differences in the churches of New Testament times. There can be little doubt that the organization of the church with the exception of the apostles was something that grew gradually, perhaps as need arose. And it may well be that the church in Jerusalem and most of the Jewish churches were not entirely organized in the same way as the churches the apostle Paul established. There is certainly some indication that in Jerusalem they honored men in a way calling them "pillars" which the Apostle Paul was not inclined to do. However, we do know that they had elders in the Jerusalem church, for when the controversy over "circumcision" and "eating of meats" arose they were present along with the brethren and the apostles in that first great conference in Jerusalem to determine these important issues.

But before we take account of these apparent differences between the churches let us first seek for what they had in common, that which set them apart from the synagogue of the Jews, from the pagan mystery cults, from the various associations of the Roman world, that which set them apart and enabled Paul to refer to the church as "the body of Christ." In this way, perhaps, we will best be able to understand the differences and divergencies that seemingly arise. It must be admitted, first of all, that the focal point of these early Christian communities, be they Jewish or Gentile was faith in Jesus Christ as the divine son of the living God. That confession which is recorded in Matthew 16:18 became normative for every believer. This distinguished him from the pagans. This distinguished him from the rest of the Jewish community, if he were a Jew. When Cæsar would strike at the very heart of the gospel message, it was with a counter-confession that Cæsar, not Christ, was Lord. Perhaps the most primitive form of this confession is preserved in Acts 8:37 where Philip baptized the eunuch from Ethiopia after he had made the statement, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."⁸ A Christian was one who believed this formula and who had on the basis of it submitted to the commandments of Christ. The divinity and lordship of Jesus of Nazareth was the focal point. This all Christians had in common.

Just as the Word that became flesh, the God-man, had both a divine and a human nature, so his church, which is *his body*, is made up on the human side of men and women who have believed and obeyed the gospel. But there is the divine side also to the church.

Christ is specifically called its head. It is also a Spirit-filled body, "for by one Spirit," said the Apostle Paul, "were you all baptized into one body and were all made to partake of the same spirit."⁹ The human side is Spirit filled, filled with the Divine Spirit which is granted unto those who submit to Jesus Christ.

But there were differences between the churches that Paul established and the churches in Judea, especially at Jerusalem. Certainly the attitude of leading brethren in Jerusalem was never that entirely compatible with what we find expressed in Paul's epistles concerning such things as eating of meats, circumcision, keeping the law. One of the earliest controversies in the church was over this very point. And though it was officially solved in favor of the gospel as the Apostle Paul preached it, this Judaizing spirit plainly continued to exist. But this should cause no great concern among Christians today, for the Apostle Paul is the Apostle to the Gentile world. Clearly the Apostle himself makes a distinction between the ministry of Peter and himself.¹⁰ If we do discern differences between the Jewish communities and the Gentile churches, this is no reason for despair. We will follow the Apostle to the Gentiles. If we make this kind of distinction, which certainly we are obliged to do if we follow the teaching of the New Testament concerning the church, then the divergencies which are recognizable in the New Testament church do not really affect the unity and organization of that branch of Christianity which most concerns us. There can be no doubt that those churches which Paul established and those which were directly influenced by him had many characteristics in common.

I think, however, we make a mistake when we suggest that the church of New Testament times was not organized on a basis larger than the local congregation, for it is clear that the Apostle Paul was concerned directly with each congregation he had established and was looked to as the final arbiter of all questions. The New Testament church was apostolic in its organization. The apostles were the final authority. Today they still are in those *words* which they have left concerning the life and order of the church of Christ. They still judge spiritual Israel.¹¹ Each local congregation, however, was organized separately and had its own *elders* and apparently its own *deacons* when men were qualified to meet the requirements of these high offices.¹² Paul elaborates with great clarity on the formal properties of the New Testament church in Ephesians and 1 Corinthians. These passages read as follows: "And he gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some shepherds and teachers with a view to the perfecting of the saints, for work of the service, for building up of the body of Christ."¹³ "And certain did God set in the assembly (ecclesia) first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, kinds of tongues."¹⁴ Paul's address to the Ephesian elders as recorded by Luke makes it certain that the pastors or shep-

herds referred to in Ephesians 4:11 are overseers, episkopos. "Take heed therefore to yourselves and to all the flock wherein the Holy Spirit set you overseers to *shepherd* the assembly of God."¹⁵ That the episkopos was the same person as the presbuteras, that elders and pastors were the same can, of course, easily be established. There is, however, no indication in Paul's writings that he recognized an episcopal organization of the church where one bishop overruled elders under him. Although deacons are not mentioned in the passages we noticed above, there were deacons in all of the churches that were set in order according to the will of Christ. These offices must be considered a part of his church and we must consider these from the standpoint of the church as the body, essential properties, those kinds of properties that are due to a thing before it can properly fulfill its function. Although the church may exist without them, it cannot bring about the perfecting of the saints without them. Yet there are many *accidental forms* involved in the order of the church: how the church carries on its mission program, where the church meets, what time of day, the exact order of service, the education of the members in the Scriptures, the benevolent work and the way it is to be conducted. All of these would seem to flow out of the order of the church that we have reviewed and therefore are subject to the needs of time and place. To bind a certain way of carrying on the general commandment to go preach the gospel to every creature would be illogical. To bind a certain method of appointment of elders and their ordination might also be considered in this category of what is merely accidental. To bind mere *custom* on the church would be the same sort of mistake. Customs change, man's way of doing things progresses. But we notice all of this only to emphasize the fact that it is possible for the reader to identify the church of the Lord by its form in New Testament times.

If we are to believe the New Testament that Christ chose Paul as his ambassador to the Gentile world then why is it not possible to restore the church along the lines as set forth in the writings concerning Paul as recorded in Acts and the epistles of Paul? Of course, some of the divergencies in the churches must be seen from the standpoint of the *growth* of the church. It would be absurd to expect the first assembly as we discover it on that great Pentecost to look and act just like the churches did fifty years later when they had been organized under the inspired direction of the holy Apostles. By making a descriptive analysis of the epistles of Paul it is a very simple thing to reconstruct the order of those churches which he established and nurtured by his apostolic authority.

Divergencies can be explained as due to the progressive revelation of the will of Christ, the head, the needs of the church as they arose, the first century being no doubt normative in this respect for every generation. But they are also due to the fact that the gospel was first preached to the Jews and then to the Gentiles and some of the

Jews apparently were not willing to accept fully the implication of this gospel which must be preached to all the world. It was not the purpose of this paper to discuss in detail the various aspects of the form of the New Testament church but only to indicate that such can be done and that the New Testament church can be identified. Let us notice further, then, with respect to those churches established by the Apostle Paul which we have concluded must be normative for us today since the most of us fall within that branch of the human race known as Gentile. Paul makes no difference between priesthood and laity. All the members of every congregation are called saints. Each saint is privileged to approach the throne of God without a mediation of anyone. They had a consciousness of being different from the old Jewish synagogue and in fact considered themselves no longer under the law, but under grace. Each member had received the earnest of the spirit and some, or perhaps most, had received miraculous powers whereby they could speak in tongues they had not learned, could heal and manifest unusual powers. However, in 1 Corinthians 13, Paul seems to indicate that such special powers were to cease with time, likening the church in its growth to the growth of the child to manhood, when it no longer needed the pedagogical supports of childhood. But there is no indication throughout the writings of Paul that the basic organization of the church was ever to be changed and he emphasized over and over again the church as the body of Christ. Christ is its head, there is room for no other.

¹Acts 2:42, 43

²Acts 6:1-6

³Acts 8:14-16

⁴Acts 14:23

⁵Titus 5:1-16

⁶Eduard Schweizer, "Unity and diversity in the New Testament Teaching Regarding the church," *Theology Today*, January, 1957.

⁷W. E. Garrison, *Religion Follows the Frontier* (New York: Harpers, 1931).

⁸Regardless of whether we accept this as to be found in the original text or not, it does represent a very ancient form of the confession of all who would become members of Christ's ecclesia.

⁹1 Cor. 12:13

¹⁰Gal. 2:7, 8

¹¹Luke 22:30

¹²1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-16

¹³Eph. 4:11-12

¹⁴1 Cor. 12:28

¹⁵Acts 20:28

Note: For more on the subject of "definition," see: H.W.B. Joseph, *Introduction to Logic*, Oxford U. Press, 1942, Chap. IV, pp. 66-110

Noclai Hartman, *Logic*, pp. 47-50

Aristotle's *Topics*, a, iv; 101-b-17 to 25; viii

The Unity of the Church in Paul

Abraham J. Malherbe

The modern ecumenical discussion has revived interest in the study of the unity of the early church. This discussion is frequently characterized by a misunderstanding which equates diversity with disunity. One extreme view holds that there was no real unity in the primitive church; that, on the contrary, diversity was its main characteristic.¹ This means, then, that the New Testament could not be the authority for measures toward unity. A more moderate, but quite similar view is that which recognizes some diversity in the New Testament, and draws a negative lesson from it, viz., since there were differences within the Apostolic church, they can be allowed to exist in the "coming great church."² A more positive approach, but one that is somewhat overstated, emphasizes the unity in the New Testament to the extent that the lessons which could be learned from the exhortation to unity, are lost.³ An approach which begins in a more promising manner is that represented by John Knox.⁴ In attempting a solution, all the tools of modern scholarship are used in analyzing the situation in the New Testament with regard to the unity of the church. After the problems have been laid bare, however, difficulty is experienced in finding a solution for them, for there would be a lack of an authority. The New Testament itself is not considered a suitable criterion, for it is regarded as the product of a disunited church. In the final analysis, this approach ends in a weak vote for the episcopate, for "the episcopate is the historically developed means and symbol of the unity and continuity of the church."⁵

A more realistic approach is to recognize the diversity which exists, and not to confuse it with disunity which is condemned by the New Testament writers, especially by Paul. Paul's writings reveal a deep concern for the unity of the church. We should beware, however, of regarding the concept of unity as the creation of Paul. Jesus Himself was the father of the idea. The idea of unity is implicit in Matthew 16:18, and in His view of Himself as the Shepherd (John 10:16), and as the Vine (John 15). It is clear in the High-priestly Prayer (John 17:11ff., 20 ff.). As a founder of churches, the problem of unity was continually in the foreground in Paul's thinking. He thus speaks of the unity, not only of the local churches, but also of the universal church. The theme of unity is more emphasized in his later epistles, for, as time passed, the disruptive forces appeared in the churches and needed his attention.

The chief factors of unity for Paul are "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:5). These factors are also mentioned in connection with the church's unity in the other two epistles which deal

especially with this problem. Thus in 1 Cor. 1, Paul is concerned with the person of Christ, with baptism, and with the message that he preached, to which faith was the response. Also in Col. 2:6-12 it is the person of Christ whom one puts on by baptism as an act of faith that is opposed to the beguiling philosophies.

A. ONE LORD

It is recognized today that the church cannot be separated from the person of Christ. This is particularly clear in Paul's thinking. "The Pauline Ecclesiology is fundamentally nothing other than a Christology, even as the Christology of the Apostle coincides with his soteriology."⁶ This becomes clear in Paul's treatment of situations like the one in Corinth. His aim in 1 Cor. 1:10-17 is doubtless of a practical character, to do away with the cleavage in the congregation. "The remarkable thing, however, is that Paul argues in this occasional question from the point of view of principle, basing his proofs on the unity between Christ and the church."⁷ Christ is the representative of the new People of God, the church, and there is an identity of representation between Him and the church. In this relationship lies the motivation for the unity of the church.

This unity between Christ and His church is most obvious in Ephesians and Colossians. In these epistles the *ekklesia* is for the first time spoken of in the sense of the one universal *ekklesia*. This concept of universality comes less "from the actual circumstances of the actual Christian communities than from a development of thoughts respecting the place and office of the Son of God: His leadership was felt to involve the unity of all those who were united in Him."⁸ The one church is not made up of many churches, but of believers who become partakers of Christ's body. "The One Ecclesia includes all members of all partial Ecclesiae; but its relations to them are all direct, not mediate. . . . The unity of the universal Ecclesia as (Paul) contemplated it . . . is a truth of theology and religion, not a fact of what we call ecclesiastical politics."⁹

The oneness between Jesus and the church is expressed in different figures which are used to describe the church. Although the primary relationship of unity is between Jesus and the church, it will be seen that this unity results in a very real and practical oneness of the members of the church. Particularly relevant in this respect are the metaphors of the church as body, building, and bride.

THE BODY

Paul frequently speaks of the church as the body of Christ. The use of the metaphor of the body was common in the time of Paul, and the debate continues unabated as to the origin of Paul's usage. Among English writers there is a tendency to see Greek and Latin paganism as the background against which Paul uses it.¹⁰ Two streams of thought, Stoicism and Gnosticism, employed it. Among even the earliest Stoics, the *kosmos* was regarded as a "living being" of which God was the head.¹¹ Among the later Stoics, the universe

as a whole, of which men form a part, was thought of as a body,¹² with men the members of this great body.¹³ In the same period the Empire came to be thought of as a body of which the ruler was the head.¹⁴ As the result of this unity, if one part of the body was injured, the injury was considered to have been sustained by the whole body.¹⁵

German scholars generally see more likelihood in Gnosticism as being an influencing factor.¹⁶ Following the *religionsgeschichtliche* approach, the Primal Man myths of Iranian and Persian thought are considered to be the source of the metaphor of the body. Fascinating though the speculations of the Heavenly Man may be, however, no literary or even conceptual dependence of Paul on the Gnostic myths has been proven. The weakness of the *religionsgeschichtliche* approach is its methodology. Propounders of the theory do not study each of the Gnostic systems in detail, but construct a pan-Gnostic system without regard to geographical, temporal or source relationships.¹⁷ This mystical and mythical system, whose most mythical element seems to be its very existence, is then regarded as having had an insidious effect on everything in the ancient world. The existence of Gnostic systems as early as the New Testament period is to be seriously doubted.¹⁸ That there were certain Gnostic tendencies which were making inroads into Christianity and had to be combated, is clear from the Johannine and Pauline epistles. To regard these motifs as systems which influenced Paul and John, however, requires more courage than could be inspired by a judicial evaluation of the evidence at hand.

In his tendentious work,¹⁹ W. D. Davies has tried to show that Paul's use of the metaphor goes back to Rabbinic usage. The Rabbis conceived of a unity of mankind in Adam. Their doctrine implied that the physical body of Adam and its very method of formation symbolized the real oneness of mankind. Although we might agree that Paul's anthropology is more Hebrew than Greek,²⁰ there is nothing in the Rabbinic usage which requires us to look to it as the origin of Paul's usage. There is no evidence that "the body of Adam" was used to designate mankind. Neither does Paul anywhere directly relate the phrase, "the Body of Christ" to the speculation of the First and Second Adam, as Davies implies.²¹

The most that can be done in this area of background study to Paul's usage is to regard his use of these terms as possible points of contact in conception and terminology, and especially the latter. This is certainly possible in the cases where the terminology has been proved to have been current in Paul's time.²² On the other hand, if one is to grant Paul at least as much originality as the Stoics or Gnostics or Rabbis, there is no reason why he should not independently have used the same terminology for the same reason that it occurred to them, viz., its suitability to express what he had in mind.

Paul speaks of the church as the body of Christ especially in the letters which emphasize the unity of the church. It thus appears in 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4; and Col. 3. Compare also Rom. 12:3-8, which is at the beginning of the section (chs. 12-15) in Romans, which contain repeated exhortations to mutual consideration and brotherly love. The main point that the metaphor conveys, so far as it concerns the idea of unity, is the necessity of harmony in the practical local situations in the churches. For this harmony to exist, it is necessary that the members of the body have mutual respect for each other (Rom. 12:3), and that there be a recognition of their interdependence (1 Cor. 12:14-26). Particularly in the discharging of their offices in the local work of the congregation are members to realize that they are part of the one body and are to act accordingly (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).

That it is not possible for the church to fulfill its function as the body of Christ in a state of disunity, is clear from the fact that everything is to be done in love (Rom. 12:9ff.; 1 Cor. 12:31; 13:13; Eph. 4:15, 16). Indeed, it is love that binds everything together in perfect harmony (Col. 3:14). Only when these conditions exist, does the body of Christ experience the growth which is the purpose of its existence.²³ The practical situation is to exist for the members of the body to "attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood" (Eph. 4:12, 13). One enters the body in the act of baptism (1 Cor. 12:13). The continual effort to attain to the unity and maturity in Christ then involves the moral and religious life of the Christian (Col. 2:16-3:4). It also requires an adherence to Christian doctrine. In order for the body of Christ to grow, it is necessary to be faithful to the teaching which has Jesus at its centre, and which is necessary for unity with Him (Eph. 4:13-15; cf. Rom. 16:17, 18).

Paul thus makes it clear that there is no unity of the Body of Christ, unless there is a recognition of the centrality of Christ as to purpose and authority for the Body. These two factors are to be in evidence in the local situations to be of any value in the matter of the church.

THE BUILDING

This metaphor is very closely related to that of the Body.²⁴ Paul uses the noun, *oikodome*, with the meaning of "building," only twice (1 Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:21), but he frequently uses it of the process of building, instead of as referring to that which is built (2 Cor. 10:8; 12:19; 13:10; 1 Cor. 14:25).²⁵ Jesus Himself is the foundation, *themelios*, of this building (1 Cor. 3:11) and is also its chief cornerstone, *akrogoniaios*, upon which the whole house of God is built (Eph. 2:20).²⁶ In Him "the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21).

As the structure is founded upon Christ, so the process of building also takes place by virtue of His authority. In writing of a situa-

tion where strife and disunity actually existed, Paul reiterates that the Lord had given him authority to build, and he therefore demands their respect (2 Cor. 10:8; cf. 2 Cor. 12:19; 13:10). His preaching he regarded as the laying of the foundation, for it embodied the message of Jesus (1 Cor. 3:9-11; cf. Rom. 15:20). It was the purpose of the whole Christian ministry to edify, "build up" the congregation (Eph. 4:12, 16), and this was particularly emphasized of the preaching of the prophets (1 Cor. 14:3). The metaphors of growth and building are mixed, yet the dominating thought is quite clear: The church, built on Christ, is to attain to perfection through Him. The metaphor, then, represents a picture of the church in which Jesus is the basis of its existence, as well as the factor which binds its members together. To be united with Christ is to be inextricably united with those who have also accepted Him.

THE BRIDE

Paul, concerned with the falling away of the Corinthians as the result of false teaching, compares the church to the bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:1-6).²⁷ Doctrinal error is the same as infidelity to Jesus. As her husband, He has authority over her, and she is to be subject to Him (Eph. 5:21-27). Because of His love for the church, shown by sanctifying her by giving Himself for her, and by nourishing and cherishing her, Christ and the church become one, for "a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one" (Eph. 5:25-32; Gen. 2:24). The concept of unity, as realized by love and subjection, is therefore in the forefront of Paul's thinking when he uses this metaphor.

CONCLUSION.

It has been seen that the central position of Christ in the church has certain practical implications for Paul and that these are brought out by the metaphors which he uses for the church. Allegiance to the one Lord involves the unity in the fullest sense, of the structure, ministry, doctrine, edification, moral life, and ideals of the church. By virtue of being "in Christ," the believer is on the way to maturity. This is not attained through crass individualism or in isolation, or by one's own will, but is possible only insofar as one is partaker of and contributor to what Professor H. Wheeler Robinson has taught us to call the "corporate personality." Only when there is this solidarity between the aggregate of believers and their Lord, is there Christian unity.

B. ONE FAITH

The One Lord makes the unity of the church both possible and necessary. The relationship that the believer sustains with Him is one of faith, and it is therefore natural that there is to be one faith. *Pistis*, "faith," is used by Paul to describe, subjectively, confidence in Christ (Rom. 10:9, 17), objectively, the body of doctrine that is to be believed (Rom. 1:5; Gal. 1:23; 1 Tim. 4:1); and by metonymy, the obedience of faith (Rom. 1:8; Tit. 2:10).²⁸

Faith, in the subjective sense, comes from the preaching of the message of Christ (Rom. 10:8, 17) and results in a verbal confession (Rom. 10:10). Paul states that one cannot be brought to make this confession, except by the work of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3), and this is said in a context in which he emphasizes the unity of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4-11). The oneness of the Spirit therefore points to the oneness of the faith that is kindled in the believer. The object of this trust, moreover, is Christ Himself, particularly as He is announced in the preaching as the crucified and resurrected Lord.²⁹ Paul thought it was his work as a preacher and apostle to bear testimony to the fact that *all* men can be ransomed by the *one* mediator, who is between the *one* God and men (1 Tim. 2:5-7; cf. 2 Tim. 1:9-11). Accordingly, he uses *marturion*, "testimony," pre-eminently for the witness to the death and resurrection of the Lord.³⁰ For Paul there is only one gospel, the testimony that he bears (Gal. 1:8; 2 Thess. 1:8-10), and this is that Jesus Christ is Lord (2 Cor. 4:5). This preaching of His death and resurrection brings forth the confession that He is Lord (1 Cor. 12:3). To say that He is Lord, indeed, is to confess His resurrection (Rom. 10:9; Phil. 2:9-11). Faith, in the subjective sense, then, is kindled by one Spirit, has one Lord as its object, who is presented to men by preaching which has one theme, and is expressed in one confession.

The unity of the faith, understood in an objective sense, lay close to Paul's heart even at the beginning of his literary career, and it increased as the danger of apostasy increased.³¹ Already in his first letters he feels the necessity of emphasizing that there is only one gospel (Gal. 1:6ff.), and to mention that he withstood Peter because he was not "straightforward about the truth of the gospel" (Gal. 2:14). He requires adherence to the doctrines which had been received from him (2 Thess. 2:15; cf. 3:6), and orders that failure to do so should cause disfellowship (2 Thess. 3:14). The Corinthians maintained the traditions which he had delivered to them (1 Cor. 11:2), but they are exhorted to agree, to be of the same mind and the same judgment (1 Cor. 1:10). His prayer for the Romans is that they live in harmony with each other, in accord with Christ Jesus, so that they with one voice may glorify God (Rom. 15:5, 6). Dissensions and difficulties are regarded as the results of opposition to the doctrines that they had been taught (Rom. 16:17, 18).

In his prison epistles, Paul is still more interested in the unity of the church, particularly as it is related to doctrine. This "unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" is the objective for which Christ instituted the various offices in the church, "so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine. . . ." (Eph. 4:11ff.). Concerning false doctrines, Paul admonishes the Colossians (Col. 2:4ff.) of the sufficiency of Christ in all spiritual matters. As they had received Christ, they were to live in Him, rooted and built in Him, and

established in the faith, just as they had been taught (Col. 2:6, 7). They were to be on the watch against human wisdom with empty deceit (Col 2:8). In an attempt to nip the incipient division in the bud in Philippi, Paul wishes to hear that they "stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1:27). Again, he asks, "complete my joy by being of the same mind" (Phil. 2:2, 3), the disposition required being the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5).

More interesting yet are Paul's Pastoral Epistles. As the danger of digression increased, and the end of his life drew near, he was more concerned with the care for the "sound" or "good" doctrine. We hear of people whose faith had suffered shipwreck (1 Tim. 1:19); who depart from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1; 6:10); who oppose the truth (2 Tim. 3:8ff.); who upset the faith of others (2 Tim. 2:18). In these passages "faith" is used in the objective sense and is a synonym for the special expressions, "sound doctrine," "good doctrine." How strongly Paul felt about heretical teaching and teachers is illustrated by his description of them. The teaching is called "godless chatter" (1 Tim. 6:20) and is said to act like gangrene (2 Tim. 2:16f). The teachers of these doctrines are fierce wolves who speak perverse things (Acts 20:28ff.); they are dogs (Phil. 3:2) and have a corrupt mind and counterfeit faith (2 Tim. 3:8). They were to be treated accordingly. Some were delivered to Satan (1 Tim. 1:20), while others were to be rebuked (Titus 1:13) and to be taught, so that they could escape from the snare of the devil, after having been caught by him (2 Tim. 2:23ff.) After repeatedly admonishing a factious man, the man of God is not to have anything to do with him, for his actions will show that he is perverted and sinful (Titus 3:10ff.).

Subjective and objective faith are not unrelated or independent of each other. As the former is the acceptance of God's revelation in Christ, so the latter is the explication of that revelation and of the believer's relationship with Christ. This is brought out clearly in Paul's description of the causes of disunity in doctrine, and of his antidote to disunity. Dissensions are caused because the false teachers do not serve Christ, but have selfish motives (Rom. 16:17, 18). Anyone who does not agree with the teaching of Jesus is puffed up with conceit and knows nothing. He has a "morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, base suspicions" (1 Tim. 6:4). To oppose these men, Paul goes to the source of the trouble. He suggests that the mind of Christ will prevent dissensions (Phil. 2:5), that Christians who are troubled by speculations should continue to live in Him, "rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith" (Col. 2:6-8). Instead of taking part in controversies, the Lord's servant is to manifest the characteristics of his Master (2 Tim. 2:22-26).

In summary, then, there is a unity of "the faith" because there is one Lord. As He determines the content of the faith, so also does

He determine the believer's relationship with it. Allegiance to the faith is never mere fidelity to certain doctrines. It is a dedication to the Lord, which is reflected in adherence to His teachings. To dissent from the body of doctrine is therefore an indication of a lack of the proper personal relationship with Christ.

Paul's concept of the unity of the faith is reflected in his view of the ministries of the church. It is significant that he discusses the offices and functions of the ministry particularly in those epistles which deal pre-eminently with the problem of the unity of the church. In 1 Cor. 12 the plurality of the spiritual gifts and the accompanying tendencies toward disunity cease to be a problem when Paul emphasizes that they are the working of the *one* and the *same* Spirit (vs. 4-11). The various functions are to be performed harmoniously, since the ministers are members of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27, 28). The purpose of these gifts is to build up the body (1 Cor. 14:3, 27). Likewise, in Rom. 12:4-8, the figure of the body, with its connotation of oneness, is used again in describing the various functions. So also is it used in Eph. 4:11-16, where it is more explicitly stated that the purpose of the offices is the attainment of the unity of the faith (v. 13).³²

C. ONE BAPTISM

Paul mentions baptism in his discussion of the unity of the church, for it is the act by which man becomes one with Christ (Rom. 6:3, 4; Gal. 3:27). It fits in well with Paul's thinking in Eph. 4:4-6.³³ The response to the one Lord, is one of faith, which is outwardly expressed in the one baptism.³⁴ The believer puts Christ on in baptism (Gal. 3:27). This act also places him in a special relationship with other members of the body, for it is baptism that creates the unity of Christians (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28). This unity transcends differences as to nationality, social position, and sex.³⁵ A similar list is found in Col. 3:11, which does not explicitly refer to baptism, but whose main point is also that the differences were effaced by Christ. Verses 9, 10 of this section, however, have reminiscences of 2:11, 12; Gal. 3:27, which do refer to baptism. It is clear, then, that Paul conceives of baptism as the act by which man puts on Christ and at the same time becomes part of a group of believers who constitute a church of Christ.

While baptism in a sense creates the church as a unit, the other Christian ordinances occupy an equally prominent role in maintaining that unity.³⁶ Thus singing is mentioned in a context in which the keynote is harmony and mutual edification (Col. 3:12-17). It is probably significant that the command is to sing to one another (cf. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). All things are to be done for edification (1 Cor. 14:26). The same is also true of prophesying (1 Cor. 14:3, 4).

The Lord's Supper, by its very nature, is more explicit.³⁷ The only passages in which Paul discusses the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 10, 11), are in a context in which his main point is the unity of

the church. Christ is here not merely the motivating power towards oneness, but, as in baptism, is the real basis of it. The participation in the blood and the body of Christ includes as a necessary consequence, unity among Christians, for, "since there is one loaf, we who are *many* are *one* body, for we all partake of the same loaf" (1 Cor. 10:17).³⁸

CONCLUSION

Our investigation has shown that for Paul the real reason for the unity of the church is Christ. Because there is only one Lord, there is also only one Faith, and one Baptism, which expresses faith.

¹E. W. Parsons, *The Religion of the New Testament*, New York, 1939; E. F. Scott, *The Varieties of New Testament Religion*, New York, 1943.

²C. T. Craig, *The One Church - In the Light of the New Testament*, Nashville, 1951.

³Floyd V. Filson, *One Lord, One Faith*, Philadelphia, 1953; A. M. Hunter, *The Message of the New Testament*, Philadelphia, 1944.

⁴John Knox, *The Early Church and the Coming Great Church*, Nashville, 1955.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁶E. Percy, *Der Leib Christi: In den paulinischen Homologumena und Antilegomena*, Lund, 1942, p. 45. For a similar view among leaders of the Restoration Movement on the American frontier, see Roy Ward, "The Nineteenth Century Restoration Movement and the Plea for Unity," *Restoration Quarterly* II (1958), p. 82f.

In connection with the close relationship between Christology and the church, note the cosmic unity which is attained through Christ's resurrection (Eph. 1:16-23; Col. 1:15-20). The resurrection, the fact upon which the church is built, is also the act by which God made the kosmos subject for the church. In a similar manner, the division in the human race is overcome by the saving act of Christ (Eph. 2:11-22). For the figure of the *polis* in describing this unity, see K. L. Schmidt, *Die Polis in Kirche und Welt*, Basel, 1939.

⁷Stig Hanson, *The Unity of the Church in the New Testament*, Uppsala, 1946, p. 75.

⁸F. J. A. Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, p. 148.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 168.

¹⁰cf. W. L. Know, *St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles*, Cambridge, 1939, p. 161.

¹¹J. von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, Leipzig, 1903-05, I, p. 153, 157, 110; III, 4.

¹²Epictetus, II, 10:3,4; Marcus Aurelius, *Meditationes* II, 1; Seneca, *De Ira* II, 31-36.

¹³Seneca, *Ep.* 95, 52.

¹⁴Seneca, *De Clementia*, I, 5, 1.

¹⁵Cicero, *Verr.* v. 67; *Pro Balbo* c. 13; cf. a similar interdependence in I Cor. 12.

¹⁶E. Kaesemann, *Leib und Leib Christi*, Tuebingen, 1933, pp. 59ff.; H. Schlier, *Theologisches Woerterbuch* III, pp. 675ff.; *Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbrief*, Tuebingen, 1930, pp. 42ff.; R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* I, New York, 1955, pp. 310ff.

¹⁷W. Bousset (*Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, Goettingen, 1907) is the dean of the researchers in this field. He applies his method to Paul's relationship with Gnosticism in *Kyrios Christos* (3rd ed.), Goettingen.

gen, 1926. For a criticism of his method, see H. H. Schaeder, *Urmform und Fortbildungen des manichaischen Systems*, pp. 73, 100.

¹⁸Cf. A. D. Nock's review of Hans Jonas' *Gnosis and spaetantiker Geist I*, in *Gnomon* XII (1936), p. 605; cf. also E. Haenchen, "Gab es eine vorchristliche Gnosis?", *Zeitschrift fuer Theologie und Kirche* 50 (1953), pp. 123-158.

¹⁹*Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, London, 1955, pp. 53-57.

²⁰J. A. T. Robinson, *The Body*, London, 1952; Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* I, p. 190ff.

²¹E. Best, *One Body in Christ*, London, 1955, p. 92.

²²That Paul used Stoic terminology on Mars Hill to express the Christian message in terms that his hearers could understand, for instance, is clear from Bertil Gaertner's definitive work, *The Areopagus Speech and Natural Revelation*, Uppsala, 1955.

²³The "growth" or "edification" of the church will be discussed below, under the discussion of the church as a building.

²⁴cf. P. Bonnard, *Jesus-Christ edifiant son Eglise*, Neuchatel, 1928.

²⁵Contra J. A. T. Robinson, *The Body*, p. 76, who states that every time Paul uses the term *oikodome*, he refers to the Body.

²⁶For the difference between *themelios* and *akrogoniaios*, see V. Taylor, *The Names of Jesus*, pp. 93-99, and Jeremias in *Theologisches Woerterbuch* I, p. 792; IV, p. 278. *Themelios* would be the ordinary foundation, and *akrogoniaios* the top stone which holds the whole structure together.

²⁷According to some researchers (Schlier, *Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbrief*; Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, p. 267ff.) This is a Gnostic view that influenced Paul. However, it is more probable that Paul remembered Jesus' use of the figure of the bridegroom, e.g., Matt. 9:15; 25:1-13, and that he applied His emphasis on the indissolubility of the marriage relationship (Matt. 5:32; 19:4ff.) to the relationship between Christ and the church.

²⁸For these different usages, see R. Milligan, *The Scheme of Redemption*, p. 479ff.; Burton, *Galatians* (I.C.C.), pp. 478-485; Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* I, pp. 314-324; Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.

²⁹Cf. I Cor. 1:23; 2:2-6; 15:1-3; Gal. 3:1; Rom. 10:8, 9. See C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development*, 1954, pp. 9-13.

³⁰I Cor. 1:6; 2:1, 2; II Thess. 1:10; I Tim. 2:6; II Tim. 1:8. The only place (I Cor. 15:15) in which he uses the verb, *marturein*, of his preaching, is also used of the resurrection.

³¹For this section of the discussion of faith, see especially, P. I. Bratsiotis, "Paulus und die Einheit der Kirche," in *Studia Paulina*, Studies for Johannes de Zwaan, Haarlem, 1953, pp. 28-36.

³²The Pastorals are explicit that, in the performance of the ministry, teachers should adhere to a standard, II Tim. 1:13, 14; 2:2, 15; 3:14-17; 4:2-4; Tit. 1:9.

³³Hanson, *op. cit.*, p. 151, thinks that in Eph. 4:4-6 we have a paranesis of baptism, "or in any case a traditional formula in some way connected with baptism." For baptism and church unity in the Restoration Movement, see Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 84f.

³⁴Baptism and faith are not two different things for Paul. Baptism is the action of faith, Gal. 3:26, 27; Col. 2:12 (cf. Mk. 16:16).

³⁵Notice how the theme of unity is emphasized by Paul. "For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body" (I Cor. 12:13). "... you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28).

³⁶cf. Oscar Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship*, p. 26ff.

³⁷For the problem of the Lord's Supper in the modern ecumenical discussion, see T. H. Mullin, "The Lord's Table and Unity of the Church," *Biblical Theology* 8 (1958) No. 1.

³⁸Cf. *Didache* 9, 4 for the theme of unity in the Lord's Supper still present in the early church.

HISTORICAL

Ancient Concepts of the Church

William M. Green

In the New Testament the word "church" (Greek, *ekklesia*) is the regular term for the Christian community, whether referring to the whole body of believers or to a local congregation. The significance of the church, and its place in God's plan are most fully set forth in Paul's letters to the Ephesians and Colossians. There the church is said to be the body of which Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22f.; Colossians 1:18, 24); it is sanctified and cleansed by him that it may be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:26f.). The unity of the body is stressed: "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:4f.). This statement agrees well with what Paul had written in his earlier letters: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all members . . . are one body, so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body . . . and were made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:12f.). "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ . . . for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:27f.)

For that church God provided a ministry: "And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ; till we all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (Ephesians 4:11-13). Of the offices named, those of apostles and prophets were recognized as temporary, while the work of pastors and teachers was entrusted to the bishops or elders of local congregations; these also had deacons to assist them. They were not specially designated as "priests," for this title was conferred on the whole Christian community (Revelation 1:6, etc.). They were not to "lord it over" the charge allotted to them, as the rulers of the Gentiles do (1 Peter 5:3; Matthew 20:25), but are to be examples to their flock. In fact, the common word for "ruler" (*archon*, often used for a ruler of a synagogue, of the Jews, of the Gentiles) is never used of any church official, although Christians are told to "Obey them that have the rule over you" (Hebrews 13:17; the phrase *tois hegoumenois hymon* means "your leaders"). The emphasis is upon teaching, concern for the flock, and exemplary life rather than upon rule and authority.

The second century witnessed the change from the church of the apostles and prophets to the church of bishops and synods, sometimes called the "ancient catholic church." The adjective "catholic,"

meaning "general" or universal," is first applied to the church by Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, who died for his faith in the reign of Trajan (98-117 A.D.) His letters, written to various churches, show especial concern about schism and heresy. Each church is exhorted to remain united under its bishop and its presbyters. No longer are these terms synonymous, as in the New Testament; a single bishop stands above the presbyters. To the church at Smyrna he writes: "Let no man do anything connected with the church without the bishop. . . . Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude also be; even as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church" ch. 8, translated in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, I, 89f.). From the meaning "universal," the word "catholic" easily passes over to describe the "right" or "true" church. Thus the letter known as the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* (written about 155) is addressed "to all the congregations of the holy and catholic (i.e., universal) church in every place," and in the narrative Polycarp is said to be the bishop of "the catholic (i.e., true) church which is in Smyrna" (ANF, I, 39, 42).

After a bishop had been established in each city to maintain the unity of the church, or churches, under his rule, it remained quite possible for differences to arise between the bishops of different cities. A bishop might even give his support to a heresy. How, then, was the unity of the universal church to be maintained? A partial answer to this question was found in the second and third centuries by assemblies of bishops in various regions; these came to be called "provincial synods." The first of these seems to have been held in Asia Minor to deal with the movement launched some time after 150 by a Phrygian, Montanus. He and certain prophetesses were seized with a spirit of ecstasy, in which they proclaimed the imminent return of the Lord, who was to reign not in Jerusalem, but in a "New Jerusalem" in Phrygia. The movement spread, and gained followers in many places. A concerted resistance was evidently needed. Hence synods met in many regions, and at last the Montanists were driven out of the church and excommunicated (Eusebius, *Church History*, 5, 16, 10, translated in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, I, 232). Another series of synods was held before the end of the second century at the request of Victor, bishop of Rome, to settle the question of the date of Easter. This festival, as an annual celebration of Jesus' death and resurrection, had been the custom as early as the time of Polycarp (before 155), but with a difference between the churches of Asia and the church of Rome. The former kept the fourteenth of Nisan (of the Jewish calendar) as the day of the Lord's death, but Rome discarded the Jewish date and kept a Sunday as the anniversary of the resurrection. In the time of Victor (about 189-198) the presence of Asiatics in Rome who insisted on keeping their own customs made the question acute. So Victor summoned a synod of bishops in Rome, requesting Polycrates of Ephesus and others to do the same in their regions. The

synods in Gaul, Pontus, Palestine, and Osroene were in agreement with Rome, but the bishops of Asia, led by Polycrates, announced their decision to abide by their ancient customs (Eusebius, *Church History*, 5, 23 f. NPNF 241 f.). Although Victor announced that all the Asiatic churches were excommunicated, he was rebuked for this by Irenæus, and the whole question remained unsolved. Evidently the Asiatic bishops were supreme in their own dioceses; provinces might be brought to unity by means of synods, but neither in Rome nor elsewhere was there an authority to enforce conformity upon a reluctant province.

In matters of essential doctrine, however, there was a general agreement among the churches throughout the world. The writings of the apostles and other inspired men of the first century were everywhere read in the churches, along with the Old Testament. Thus a "New Testament" was brought together as a necessary means of guarding the "deposit" of apostolic teaching, and a "canon" or list of inspired books was gradually completed. For the instruction of converts a creed, or summary of Christian belief, was drawn up to be memorized; this gradually took the form later known as the "Apostles' Creed." Thus upon the threefold basis of creed, canon, and episcopate rested the ancient catholic church.

The concept of this church is well defined by Irenæus. Born in Asia Minor and reared under the instruction of Polycarp, he migrated to Lyons, the chief city of central Gaul. There he was a presbyter before the persecution of 177, and later became bishop. His best known writing is the work *Against Heresies*. In refuting the Gnostic perversions of Christianity he points to the unity of the church throughout the world, and the unbroken succession of bishops in churches founded by the apostles. These bishops and their presbyters all Christians must obey, for the apostles gave them their own authority and the certain gift of truth (ANF, I, 330 f., 415, 497).

Tertullian, the African contemporary of Irenæus, insists on a similar defense of catholic doctrine. He would cut short the controversy with heretics by pointing to the churches which the apostles founded (such as Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus, Rome) as the depositories of the faith; they possess one tradition which is substantially the same everywhere. Each church has the creed, the canon of Scripture, and a succession of bishops; since the heretics have none of these, they do not deserve to be heard (*On Prescription against Heretics*, 32, 36. ANF, III, 258, 260). It had not as yet occurred to Tertullian that there might be a "falling away" in which the churches founded by apostles would depart from apostolic teaching. Later he came to admit this possibility. A puritan by temperament, Tertullian was alarmed by the worldliness which he saw in the church and turned to Montanism, which had a more rigorous discipline. He then writes in scorn of the Catholics, praising the Montanists as the only "spiritual" men.

The concept of the church which appears in the writings of Irenæus and Tertullian is further developed and clarified in the treatise of Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, *On the Unity of the Church*. Though it fills but nine pages in the translation of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (ANF, V, 421-429), it is commonly recognized as one of the most influential documents in the world. A schism had arisen in Carthage about the restoration of Christians who had denied the faith in the persecution of Decius in 250. The same question had led to a similar schism in Rome. With one, or both, of these questions in mind, Cyprian read his paper to the bishops assembled at the Council of Carthage in 251. More to be feared than persecution, he declares, is the craftiness of Satan, who has invented heresies and schisms by which he snatches men from the church. The unity of the church is established by Christ's words: "I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." To all the apostles he gives an equal power when he says: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted unto them," yet by beginning with Peter he sets forth the unity of his church. Paul also testifies to this unity by saying: "There is one body and one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism." The unity resides in the office of the bishop; the episcopate is a whole in which each bishop enjoys full possession. *Episcopatus unus est, cuius a singulis in solidum pars tenetur*; the language is that of a lawyer, indicating a joint ownership. As in a modern partnership, each partner has full capacity to act for all. Thus the unity of the church is secured, and as Cyprian adds, "no one can have God as his Father who does not have the church as his Mother."

Cyprian's theory of unity is clear. It resides in the unity of the bishops, each of whom is a successor of the apostles. Practically, their unity of action was achieved by councils, such as those which Cyprian called at Carthage. But not even the decision of a council impaired the rights of an individual bishop. Cyprian makes this clear in his address to the Seventh Council of Carthage (256), which discussed the rebaptism of heretics. Cyprian opened the council with these words: "It remains that upon this same matter each of us should bring forward what we think, judging no man, nor rejecting any one from the right of communion if he should think differently from us. For neither does any of us set himself up as bishop of bishops, nor by tyrannical terror does any compel his colleague to the necessity of obedience; since every bishop, according to the allowance of his liberty and power, has his own proper right of judgment, and can no more be judged by another than he himself can judge another. But let us all wait for the judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ANF, V, 565).

This theory, however, leaves many problems unsettled. Much might be left to the liberty of individual bishops, but presumably there was a limit to such toleration beyond which a bishop would be marked for heresy and excommunicated. Furthermore, it pro-

vides no means by which unity may be achieved on an ecumenical, or world-wide, basis. This problem became acute when Stephen, bishop of Rome 254-257, intervened in opposition to Cyprian's position on rebaptism. Cyprian argued that Stephen can be wrong, even as Peter was when he was rebuked by Paul; Peter, however, did not make any arrogant claims on the basis of his primacy, but yielded to the truth which Paul asserted (*Epist.* 71,3. ANF, V, 377). Stephen held his ground, reasserted his claims as Peter's successor, and circulated a letter in which he announced the excommunication of those who practiced rebaptism. This aroused indignation in the East as well as the West. Firmilian of Cæsarea in Cappadocia informed Stephen that in excommunicating others he had only excommunicated himself (ANF, V, 396).

We have cited a passage from Cyprian in which he refers to the church as his "Mother." This metaphor first appears in the letter of the churches of Lyons and Vienne, describing the persecution they suffered in 177. There the church is represented as a virgin mother, sorrowing for her children who had denied the faith; then the courage of other martyrs restored the fallen to new courage: "And great joy came to their Virgin Mother: those whom she had brought forth dead through miscarriage, these were restored to her alive" (Eusebius, V, 1, 45; see J. C. Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesia*, 1943, 36). Tertullian used similar language in several passages, and from him Cyprian adopts and develops the idea. There are deep emotional overtones in the passages where Cyprian speaks of the joy and grief of the Mother Church as some of her children prove steadfast, others fail in the face of torture and death. Only through punitive discipline can the lapsed be gathered again into the bosom of the Mother Church. The church is the bride of Christ, to whom in lawful wedlock she bears her spiritual children. When some of the "confessors" who had suffered for Christ joined the faction of Novatian, Cyprian writes to induce them "to return to their Mother, that is, to the Catholic Church." (See passages cited in Plumpe, *op.cit.*, 81-108):

Another idea of major importance also reached its full development in Cyprian. This is the concept of the Christian ministry as a priesthood. Tertullian (about 200) first used the Latin word for "priest" (*sacerdos*) for the Christian bishop. At the same time he asserted the universal priesthood of all believers; the minister is a priest because he is the mouthpiece or representative of a priestly race. Cyprian goes further and takes the Old Testament passages which mention priests, as directly applying to the ministers of the church: they are entitled to honor, reverence, and obedience. On this point Lightfoot remarks: "As Cyprian crowned the edifice of episcopal power, so also he was the first to put forward without relief or disguise the sacerdotal assumptions; and so uncompromising was the tone in which he asserted them that nothing was left to his suc-

cessors but to enforce his principles and reiterate his language" (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, 258 f.).

With the rise of Constantine to power (306-337) the age of persecutions gave way to the age of the imperial church and the ecumenical councils. Constantine saw that the attempt to suppress Christianity by force had failed, hence reversed the policy of his pagan predecessors and sought to make the church a bulwark for his power. He had scarcely finished the wars which made him sole emperor (324) when he was confronted by a doctrinal controversy which threatened to destroy the unity of the church. Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, had been excommunicated by a synod acting under the presidency of the bishop of that city. He left Egypt, to seek and find support elsewhere for his teaching. He insisted that the Father was prior to the Son, that the Son was not, but was created and made. When both sides called on Constantine to intervene he summoned a council of all the bishops to meet at Nicea in 325. When the bishops assembled, the Emperor took his seat on a throne before them and delivered an oration on peace and unity, then left them to their work. An attempt was made to draw up a formula for unity in simple and Scriptural terms, but at each step the Arians would offer their interpretation of the Scripture as a support of their special views. So it was decided to adopt a creed which should clearly embody the teaching accepted by the majority, along with "anathemas" to condemn the teaching of Arius. When this was done, the creed was signed by all the bishops except two. These, together with Arius, were condemned by the council, then banished to Illyricum by the Emperor.

It would seem that the Emperor's purpose was achieved, that the unity of the church was established by the Council and guaranteed by the police power of the State. But the friends of Arius were soon to undermine this achievement by discrediting their opponents, especially Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria. A number of councils were held, some amid scenes of great disorder, aiming to undo or to revise the work of Nicea. Only with the accession of Theodosius (379-395), called "the Great" for his services to the Catholic Church, was order reestablished. He deposed the Arian bishop of Constantinople, his capital city, and summoned a second ecumenical council to meet there in 381. To that council is generally ascribed the revised form of the "Nicene Creed" which has ever since been in use in both Eastern and Western Christendom.¹ This creed affirms belief "in one holy Catholic and apostolic Church." Thus one finds here what are commonly called the "four notes," or marks of the church: (1) it is *one*, as against the multitude of heresies; (2) it is *holy*, since it is the body of Christ; (3) it is *Catholic*, or universal in its extent; (4) it is *apostolic*, with a succession of bishops going back to the apostles.

The belief in "one holy Catholic and apostolic Church" was universally accepted, but schisms could still occur. The question then

was which party was the Catholic Church, and which the schism. The most famous and prolonged controversy of this sort took place in Africa. There, in the last great persecution (303-312) some of the clergy saved their lives by surrendering copies of the Scriptures, as ordered by the authorities. These were known as *traditores*, and (according to rigorist thinking) forever disqualified as priests or bishops. When Cecilian was consecrated bishop of Carthage in 311, the rigorists refused to accept him, on the ground that his consecrator had been a *traditor*. The schism thus begun lasted four centuries, deriving its name from the second and most famous schismatic bishop of Carthage, Donatus. When Augustine became bishop of Hippo in 395, he found himself involved in controversy with the Donatists. They professed to be the "one holy Catholic and apostolic" church, since they alone had a valid ministry, untainted with the sin of *traditio*. Their position became the more absurd as they themselves divided into factions: one Rogatus was the originator of a tiny schism in one village, yet he and his party made the same claim of catholicity as was made by the main body of Donatists. Nevertheless the Donatist movement spread to become a kind of national African revolt against the imperial church and against the wealthy Romanized population of Africa, and much violence resulted.

In his debates with the Donatists Augustine maintains, first, that the charges of *traditio* in the first place were unproven, and second, that if they had been true they did not justify the schism. The church can still fulfil its functions, even if its ministers are guilty of sin. The church on earth is a mixed body where tares grow with the wheat until God shall judge all and make the final separation. What, then, of the holiness of this mixed church? Here it was Tychonius, a Donatist, who gave Augustine his clue. He had spoken of a twofold division of the body of Christ. Augustine would correct him, and speak of "the true and the mixed body of the Lord, or the true and the counterfeit; because, not to speak of eternity, hypocrites cannot even now be said to be in him, although they seem to be in his church" (*On Christian Doctrine* 3, 32, 45. NPNF II, 569). The body of Christ is holy because of its relation to him, and only in that body can individuals attain holiness; yet they are not at present perfectly holy, else why should they pray each day for forgiveness of sins? The church is a mixed body which must await the last day for its perfection in holiness (See G. G. Willis, *Saint Augustine and the Donatist Controversy*, 1950, 117).

The true body of the Lord is identical with what Augustine elsewhere calls "the City of God," for whose defense he wrote his greatest work. He explains that the human race is of two parts, "the one consisting of those who live according to man, the other of those who live according to God. And these we mystically call the two cities, are the two communities of men, of which the one is predestined to reign eternally with God, and the other to suffer eternal punishment with the devil" (*City of God*, 25, 1. NPNF II, 284).

The church that exists in this wicked world cannot be identical with the city of God, for in it there are many reprobate mingled with the good, as good and bad fish are mixed in a drag net, to be separated only in God's final judgment (*op.cit.*, 18, 49. NPNF II, 391). Yet we must not think of Augustine's distinction as equivalent to the modern notion of a visible and "invisible" church. For Augustine the church is a visible body, not yet purged of its unholy members, nor completed in its number, but entrusted with the gospel and the sacraments by which the elect are called to become citizens of the City of God. Angels, too, belong to that city, just as the angels of the Devil belong to his city. When thinking of the present age on earth, Augustine sometimes speaks of the City of God as identical with the church. Often it is afflicted and persecuted, but is still made strong and glorious by hope. It is "a city surpassingly glorious, whether we view it as it still lives by faith in this fleeting course of time, and sojourns as a stranger in the midst of the ungodly, or as it shall dwell in the fixed stability of its eternal seat, which it now with patience waits for, expecting . . . final victory and perfect peace."²

¹See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 1950, 325. Kelly argues that "the council of Constantinople did in fact promulgate and give currency to the (revised Nicene) creed, but in doing so it did not conceive of itself as manufacturing a new creed."

²*City of God* 1, Preface. NPNF II, 1. For a summary of passages on the "city of God" and the "church" see J. E. C. Welldon's edition (1924), II, 647-651 and 686 f.)

The Church in Medieval Thought

Fausto Salvoni

The doctrine of the Church was developed by the theologians only after the Council of Trent. The teaching of the Middle Age about the Church is therefore to be found only in incidental sentences of some theologians, in a few decisions of the Councils, and in the opinions of the ecclesiastical jurists. The Catholic teachers of today explain this silence by the fact that the doctrine of the Church became an object of study only after the opposition made to it by the Protestants.¹ But as A. Harnack² has said, We do not forget two other reasons: (a) The hierarchy of the church concerned chiefly the church of Rome and not other churches. And at Rome, where the juridical mind of the Roman Kingdom was surviving, law was studied more than theology.³ Roger Bacon (ca 1214-1294) asserted that the church should eliminate the earthly law, which was studied instead of the Bible with great damage to her spirituality.⁴ (b) Moreover the theology of Rome until the Council of Lyon (year 1274) had difficulty in accepting the hierarchical doctrine of the church, being more in harmony with the Biblical teaching about the church. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), though he admitted the authority of the pope, debated the overly juridical organization of the Church.⁵ Peter Lombard (ca 1100-1160) in his famous *Sententiarum Libri Quator*, which became a scholastical book, did not even mention the pope.

For the purpose of clarity this study will be divided in the following way:

I. The Nature of the Church

A. The Definition of the Church

B. Members of the Church

C. The Marks of the Visible Church

1) Distinguishing Marks

2) The Hierarchy

II. The Power of the Church

A. Infallible Teaching

1) The Church has the Power of Teaching without Errors

2) Can the Pope become Heretic?

B. The Power of the Government

1) The Power regarding the Christian People

a) The Power of Giving Laws

b) The Power of Judging

c) The Coercive Power

1. The Nature of the Church

The Definition of the Church

The medieval theologians made a distinction between the invisible Church and the visible Church.

The Invisible Church. The invisible Church is constituted of all the persons who are united to Christ, including the souls now living in heaven,⁶ the angels,⁷ and the Jews before Christ who walked by faith and love.⁸

The Visible Church. The visible Church, according to Hugh of S. Victor (1096-1141), is the home of God, the city of the king, the body of Christ, the wife of the lamb, the ark of Noah in which God becomes united with mankind.⁹ "The holy church is the body of Christ, vivified by the one Spirit, united and sanctified by the one faith."¹⁰ The church is the "congregation of all the faithful" said Thomas Aquinas.¹¹ She, as the mystical body of Christ, makes one person with him,¹² the Holy Spirit being her heart.¹³

In the Bull *Unam Sanctam* of Boniface VIII (pope 1294-1303) the Church is described as "the mystical body of Christ. . . . She is unified by her husband, her faith, her sacraments, and her love. She is the seamless tunic of the Lord, which was not divided and was therefore given by lot."¹⁴ It is therefore impossible to divide the church into a "sensual" and a "spiritual" church as the Spiritual Friars taught.¹⁵ John XXII (pope 1316-1334) condemned their error which sustained "two churches, one being sensual, full of wealth, filled with pleasure, spotted with crimes, over which presides the bishop of Rome with all his prelates. The other being spiritual, clean because of her frugality, adorned with virtues, surrounded with poverty, in which are the Friars only and their disciples for their spiritual life."¹⁶

2. Members of the Church

Only the baptized are the real members of the visible Church, notwithstanding they can be sinners. This was taught by the *Decretum pro Armenis* in the Council of Florence (œcumenical XVII, year 1439-1445). "Through baptism, which is the door of the spiritual life, we become members of Christ and of the Church, his body."¹⁷ Because in the Church alone it is possible to reach salvation, it is logical that all men not living in the church are damned. The people baptized by heretics cannot be saved unless they become members of the Catholic Church before death.¹⁸ All heretics and schismatics, notwithstanding their alms and their life given for Jesus, shall go into everlasting fire.¹⁹ "Everyone who is not in peace and harmony with the Church cannot have the Lord with him"²⁰ because in the Church alone it is possible to do fruitful works. There alone we work in the vineyard; we are in the ark.²¹ This doctrine was taught also in the Profession of faith sent in the year 1053 by Leo IX (pope 1049-1054) to Peter, bishop of Antioch, and by the Council of Lateran IV (œcumenical XII) in the year 1215.²²

The strongest form of this doctrine was pronounced by Boniface

VIII (pope 1294-1303) in the Bull *Unam Sanctam* (Nov. 18, 1303). Wherein is indeed asserted the necessity for each man to obey the Roman pope if he wishes to be saved: "We declare, say, decide, and utter that it is absolutely necessary for every creature to submit himself to the Pope in order to reach salvation."²³ In all the precedent affirmations we do not find the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, saying that to obtain salvation it is sufficient to be baptized "in reality or in desire." Therefore a man "brought up in the woods" can obtain faith sufficient for salvation. This medieval opinion became common only after the council of Trent.²⁴

The Marks of the Visible Church

The true Church of Christ can be identified by some distinguishing marks and by her hierarchy.

Distinguishing Marks. Against the continual schisms the medieval theologians following the doctrine of the fathers as previously set forth noted some distinguishing marks of what they considered the true Church.

a) *The Oldest List.* Already the council of Constantinople I (year 381) taught: "we believe in the only, holy, catholic, apostolic Church."²⁵ This same profession of faith was repeated by the Council of Constantinople II,²⁶ by the letter *Congratulamur vehementer* of Leo IX,²⁷ by the Bull *Unam Sanctum* of Boniface VIII.²⁸ In all these professions of faith we do not find any hint of the Holy See of Rome. They suppose therefore a condition in which the bishop of Rome did not attain the later supremacy over the whole Church.

b) *The Roman Profession of Faith.* The idea soon sprang forth in the Roman church that the true Church of Christ must be united to the Roman church. The profession of faith uttered by Hormisdas (pope 514-523) said that "only in the Roman See is it possible to find the whole, true and complete firmness of Christian religion."²⁹ The logical conclusion of this teaching was the addition of the word "Roman" to the list of distinguishing marks of the true Church, as we can read in the profession of faith uttered by Innocent III.³⁰

The Hierarchy. It is principally through the hierarchy that man has the possibility of distinguishing the true Church, according to the Catholic teachers. By the bishops and the pope, who are the successors of the apostles, we know which is the right church of Christ.

a) *The Bishops.* The medieval theologians agreed with the precedent distinction made between the "laity" and the "clergy." The priests by holy ordination possess many powers which other Christians do not have. During the middle ages the "laity" was left ever more aside and was deprived of the former right of voting and electing the bishops. The first Latern Council (Oecumenical IX) established in the year 1123 that "the laity, even when they are monks, have no faculty of disposing anything in ecclesiastical affairs, of which the bishops alone can dispose according to the apostolic laws."³¹

Preaching "either publicly or privately" was from this time reserved only for the priests who received this authority from the bishops or the pope.³²

b) *The pope.* At the summit of the ecclesiastical hierarchy is the pope. The church is therefore a monarchical society. In the Decree, wrongfully ascribed to Gelasius I (pope 492-496), it had already been asserted that the papal authority is grounded in the sentence of Jesus to Peter, "You are Peter and on this stone I will build my church."³³ In the council of Lyon (year 1274) the supremacy of the pope was transferred from the realms of faith to the power of jurisdiction.

"The holy church of Rome has a complete and supreme authority and principality over the whole catholic church, because she received from the Lord in her summit, that is, Peter, to whom the pope is the successor, the plenitude of the power. Therefore the Roman church must defend the truth of faith and decide, by her own sentence, the questions about faith. Everyone who has ecclesiastical action, can appeal to her judgment. To this same church are subjected all the other churches, to her all the prelates must give obedience and respect."³⁴ From this time the pope was proclaimed the "*Vicar of Christ*,"³⁵ with whom he forms the unified head of the church.³⁶

The Spanish John of Torquemada in his *Summa de Ecclesia*, which was the first study about the church, exalted the pope in the highest degree.³⁷ The same power of the bishops is grounded, according to him, in the papal power. Their jurisdiction does not come from God, as was later asserted by the Vatican Council in the year 1870, but comes directly from the pope.³⁸

With the progress of his authority, the pope reserved to himself the name of "pope," which in the past was used by all bishops. According to the *Dictatus papae* of Gregory VII "this name is reserved to the bishop of Rome in the whole world."³⁹ As a symbol of his power the pope from the XI century used a special head-cloth in the non liturgical feasts. In the beginning it had two crowns; but in the time of Bonifacius VIII (pope 1294-1303), a third crown being added, was named "tiara," that is, "three-kingdoms."⁴⁰

c) *The Pope and the Oecumenical Council.* In the Middle Ages the question of the pope's superiority or inferiority to the oecumenical council was discussed.⁴¹ There were many reasons for this discussion: (a) First there was the study of the Biblical passages which speak of the authority of the church ("Tell it to the church" Matt. 18:18) and of the election of the bishops by the church (Acts 14:23 Greek text). The church, having given the authority to the bishops and to the pope, can also withdraw it. (b) Two juridical sentences were believed: "The world is superior to the city (of Rome)" and "the whole is superior to a portion." The college of the bishops is therefore superior to the pope of Rome, as the whole body is superior

to the head. Another reason was the fact that the church can judge an heretical pope; therefore the pope is subject to the Council.⁴² (c) The position of the pope was weakened in the XIV century because of the war of Boniface VIII against Philip IV of France and of John XXII against Louis of Bavaria. The great occidental schism (1378-1417) with its three popes debating for the papal power caused the question about the supreme authority of the church.

The first theorist of the conciliar doctrine was Marisilius of Padua,⁴³ who in his *Defensor pacis* denied the existence of a Vicar of Christ. The emperors created the pope. The supreme authority of the church is the council, in which also the "laity" must participate. If the church entrusted in the past the power to the pope, she can also revoke it.

The conciliar idea was taught by two German teachers of the University of Paris, Henry of Langenstein⁴⁴ and Corradus of Gelnhausen.⁴⁵ The cardinal and chancellor of the University of Paris, Peter of Ailly (1350-1420) supported the conciliar doctrine. "The firmness of the church cannot be grounded in the weakness of Peter, but only in Jesus Christ," said he. The pope is the head because he received his power from the church (*ministerialiter exercens*) but cannot be superior to the church, it being impossible for a part to be superior to the whole. If all the priests should err, there would ever be existing in the church some humble persons who would guard the deposit of the revelation.⁴⁶

The learned and pious Gerson⁴⁷ spread widely this teaching. Jesus gave the supremacy not directly to the pope but to the church of Rome (Matt. 18:17, "Tell it to the church.") The pope therefore is fallible, inferior to the oecumenical council, and can be judged, condemned, and dismissed by the church. The pope as the "husband" (?) of the church can abandon the church (Remember the dismissal of Pope Celestine V in the year 1294.) but can also be abandoned by the church when she is tyrannically ruled. As it is possible to kill the aggressor, in the same way it is possible for the church to protect herself and to depose an unworthy pope. In the councils the priests too and the Christians have the right of giving their vote. The Christian people are indeed the persons who delegated their authority to the clergy.

Two decrees of the fourth and sixth section of the Council of Constance supported the conciliar theory. They are "The council of Constance, regularly, being the representative of the church, receives directly its power from God. Each member of the church, including the pope, is therefore obliged to obey all decrees that it will decide for the faith, the destruction of the schism, and the reformation of the church." "Everyone, including the pope, who would refuse obedience to the orders, the laws, and the decrees of this holy council or of each future oecumenical council regularly assembled should

be subjected to penitence and be punished according to his faults, if he will not repent."⁴⁸

The same doctrine was repeated in the council of Basel, which after its dismissal by Eugene IV (pope 1431-1447) continued its work and tried to depose even the pope. The conciliariter teaching was definitively condemned by the Lateran Council V (Oecumenical XIII, 1515-1517) which established that "the Roman pope has authority over the councils, he has the right to convoke, to transfer, and to close the councils."⁴⁹

2. The Power of the Church

The Infallible Teaching

The Church has the Power of Teaching without Error. That the church has the power to teach without error is supposed by some councils⁵⁰ and by many theologians who adduce the tradition to support some doctrines.⁵¹ The infallibility of the church, supposedly asserted by the prayer of Jesus for Peter (Luke 22:31-33) or by the sentence "you are Peter" (Matt. 16:18), was henceforth related by some theologians to the pope who, as successor to Peter, is infallible. Hormisdas was the first pope who asserted the church of Rome never erred during her past history.⁵² Pope Agatho (678-681), recognizing a special privilege of the Roman Church, also asserted that this seat will never err in the future.⁵³ This doctrine was repeated by Gregory VII⁵⁴ and Leo IX.⁵⁵ Thomas Aquinas gave some principles that were accepted by the Vatican Council (1870). He asserted that "the universal church cannot err, Jesus having said to Peter upon whose confession the church is builded, "I prayed for you, that your faith may not fail."⁵⁶ In another passage he sustains that this infallible power resides in the Roman pope.⁵⁷ His authority is required for the unity of the Church.⁵⁸ The Holy Spirit must therefore make sure by his assistance the infallibility of papal decisions regarding salvation (compare John 14:26), the changing of the articles of faith,⁵⁹ and probably the canonization of the saints.⁶⁰ But he does not guarantee the decisions of some particular facts, as, e.g., miracles, sins, etc.⁶¹

Can the Pope become Heretic? In the *Decree of Gratian* we find this expression attributed by the Cardinal Deus Dedit (d. 1087) and Yves de Chartres to Boniface Archbishop of Mayence: "No one can judge the sins of the pope, who alone judges man, but can be judged by no one, except for the sin of heresy."⁶² Innocent III asserted "the faith is very necessary for me, because I have only God as the judge of all by sins, but for the one sin against the faith I can be judged by the church."⁶³

The medieval theologians did not study this possibility of heretical popes.⁶⁴ But all the canonists of the XII and XIII centuries accepted and agreed with the decree of Gratian. They acknowledged the possibility for the pope to become heretical. They questioned only how he can be judged by the church. Some canonists extended the au-

thority of the church to judge the pope also to other sins.⁶⁵ But generally this authority was restricted to heresy.⁶⁶ According to Rufinus the heresy must be pertinacious,⁶⁷ that is, continuing after one or two admonitions. In that position the pope is inferior to every other Catholic Christian (*minor quolibet catholico*) said Huguccio.⁶⁸

Though cardinal Torquemada wrote that papal infallibility is caused by special assistance of the Holy Spirit, he really minimized its value. The pope indeed cannot only err as a private person, but he can also err in defining the creed. But his error, due to the liberty of the pope's will, cannot be adduced to prove the fallibility of the pope. He cannot therefore be deposed by the council because he is already displaced by himself for his heresy.⁶⁹

The Power of Government.

Each government has the power of making laws, of judging, and of punishing. In the Middle Ages these three powers were given also to the church. The power of the pope during this time grew more and more to the damage of that of the bishops. The canonists sustained indeed all of the papal pretensions by their reasoning. We shall study the relation of church government to its members.

The Power of the Bishops and of the Pope regarding other Christians. a) *The Power of Giving Laws.* The bishops in their dioceses and the pope for the whole church can establish new laws. The consciousness of this power is proved by the activity of the councils. In the Middle Ages the papal power was growing steadily. Until the XIC century the metropolitans had accepted the election of the bishops of their provinces. But from the XV century this was reserved to the pope. (Compare the Convention of Constance in the year 1418). The archbishops from the IX century asked the *pallium* by the pope within three months after their consecration. From the middle of the XI century they were obliged to go personally to Rome to accept it. From the XII century a special oath of obedience was required from the metropolitan bishops; this became a law in 1234 by decree of Gregory IX. From the time of Paschal II (pope 1099-1118) they were obliged also to go periodically to visit the pope (*visitatio liminum SS. apostolorum*, about 1100). In the XV century, with the confirmation of the bishops by the pope, this visit became a necessity also for the bishops.⁷⁰

The bishop of Rome is therefore the only person who can be called "oecumenical bishop" (*episcopus universalis*, *Dictatus papae*, Gregory VII, n.2) and who can make laws for the entire church (n.7). He is the only person who can preside over the councils by legates (n.4) and consecrate bishops in all parts of the world (n.14). In the past councils were assembled and approved by the emperors, but in the Middle Ages this was done by the pope: "No council can be called oecumenical without the convocation of the pope."⁷¹ The at-

tempt of Frederick I Redbeard to vindicate the precedent right did not succeed (council of Pavia, 1160).

b) *The power of judging.* Gregory VII (pope 1073-1085) reserved to the Roman church all the greatest actions (*causae majores, Dictatus papae*, n.21). The popes removed the bishops, even when they were not present, reestablished them in their seats, or transferred them to other places (*Dictatus papae*, 3.5.13.25). Alexander III in the year 1170 reserved to the pope the canonization of the saints, and the Lateran Council IV in the year 1215 reserved to him the approval of new relics.⁷²

The right of appealing to Rome was asserted with energy by Gregory VII, "No one dare accuse a person who has appealed to the apostolical seat."⁷³ Notwithstanding the opposition of some Christian writers, as Bernard of Clairvaux, who attacked its abuse,⁷⁴ this right was ratified by the council of Lyon: "Everyone who has an ecclesiastical action can appeal to the Roman Seat; everyone can apply for its judgment in each action regarding the church, because to it all the churches are subject, and all the bishops owe to it obedience and reverence."⁷⁵ The Roman sentences are indisputable and definitive⁷⁶ because "the judgment of inferior persons can be submitted to men with greater authority. . . . but the decree of Rome, whose authority is superior to the other churches, cannot be judged by others. Therefore the ecclesiastical rules said that from every part of the world it is possible to appeal to Rome, but no person can appeal against its judgment."⁷⁷

For the prompt settlement of all these affairs the pope was helped by the *Cardinals*, a derivation from the earlier college of the Roman priests or deacons. They were indeed the twenty-five priests of the Roman titular churches and the seven deacons charged with the assistance of the poor (VI century). Later their number changed, but their authority became ever greater. They constituted therefore the Senate of the church, with the charge of leading Christians after the death of a pope and of selecting his successor.⁷⁸ Among the cardinals were elected from the XI century the papal legates (*legati a latere*) sent by the pope to various countries of the world to promote reformations and relations with the kings. This naturally stirred up no little opposition among the bishops, who were being deprived of their authority.

Another means of government was the papal court, with its numerous offices. In the Middle Ages they were: a) The *chancellor's office* from the XI century worked in the preparation of papal documents. b) The *apostolical chamber* from the XI century dealt with the financial and administrative affairs. It was necessary to secure the money for paying all the persons working for the pope. This money was collected from the pontifical State, from the taxes of churches and abbeys, from the fees of the kings avowing the papal supremacy and of the bishops visiting the pope, from the contribu-

tion for the *pallium*, and for the nomination and confirmation of the bishops.⁷⁹ c) The papal Penitentiary worked with absolutions and dispensations. From the XII century the pope reserved to himself the absolution of some sins (reserved sins). A first compilation of reserved sins was promulgated in the XIII century by Onorius III or Gregory IX. The papal penitentiary was therefore a papal court of justice.⁸⁰ d) The *Holy Rota* was a papal tribunal for the ecclesiastical actions. It began its work in the XIII century.

The Coercive Power. The Church could punish sinners by punishments in conformity with their faults. All the councils excommunicated the Christians who did not obey their decrees. The Church could also submit the heretics to some material chastisement, but could not kill them. But it could give the disobedient to the secular arm that it might punish them according to law.⁸¹

⁷⁹F. Cayre, *Patrologie*, (Paris, 1933), Vol. 11, p. 627.

⁸⁰*Storia dei dogmi*, (Italian translation, Mandrisio, 1914), Vol. VI, p. 164.

⁸¹There was a juridical school at Rome in the time of pope Innocentius IV (1243-1253); near to Rome, at Bologna, there was the most important school of law in the world. For the study of theology it was however necessary to reach Paris, France. Many popes were jurists but not theologians: so, e. g., Alexander III, Innocentius III and IV, Boniface VIII, et cetera. Compare G. Mollat, *Introduction a l'etude du droit canonique et du droit civil*, (Paris, 1930).

⁸²*Opus Minus*, edit. J. S. Brewer, (London, 1859), p. 322ff.

⁸³P. J. Congar, "Die Ekklesiologie des Hl. Bernhard" in *Bernhard von Clairvaux, Moench und Mystiker* (Wiesbaden, 1953; in *Analecta S. Ordinis Cisterciensis* 9 (1953) 136-190.

⁸⁴The church on earth is the congregation of the faithful people; the church in her fatherland is the congregation of the blessed in heaven. Christ was a pilgrim of this earth, but also one who contemplated God. Therefore, he is not only the head of the faithful, but also of the heavenly people." Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, p. III, q. VIII, a. IV ad 2um.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, p. III, q. VIII, a. IV.

⁸⁶"The ancient fathers of the Jews . . . through the sacraments of the law were united to Christ by the same faith and love which bind us to Jesus. They therefore were members of the same body of the church to which we belong," *Ibid.*, p. III, q. VIII, a. III ad 3um.

⁸⁷*De arca Noe morali*, II, 8, Pl 175, 642.

⁸⁸*De sacramentis*, 1. IV, p. 11, c. 2 PL 176, 416.

⁸⁹"Congregatio (seu collectio) omnium fidelium" Thomas Aquinas, *Ibid.* p. 1, q. 117, a. 2. This sentence was drawn from the Fourth Council of Lateran (year 1215) "fidelium ecclesia" Denz. B 430. 433). Thomas lived in the years 1225-1274.

⁹⁰"The head visibly prevails over all the other members of the body; but the heart secretly exerts influence upon them. Therefore the Holy Spirit, who invisibly gives life and unity to the church, is compared with the heart, and Jesus Christ himself is compared to the head, through his invisible nature by which he is beyond all men." *Sum. Theol.* p. III, q. VIII, a. 1 ad 3 um.

⁹¹Some other theologians said that love, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit, gives life and unity to the church. Hugh of St. Victor (1096-1141) writes: "Love gives unity to the church . . . if you say love

or unity, you say the same thing, because love is unity and unity is love." *De sacramentis*, l. 11, p. XIII, c. 11 PL 176, 544.

¹⁴Denz. B. 468.

¹⁵They were stricter Franciscans who accepted the views of Joachim of Floris (1145-1202) and lived in the sixth decade of the thirteenth century. They named themselves "Spirituals" or "Friars" (fraticelli).

¹⁶Decree *Gloriosam Ecclesiam* of January 23, 1318, in Denz. B. 485.

¹⁷*Decretum pro Armenis* of November 22, 1439, "Sanctum Baptisma, quod vitae spiritualis janua est: per ipsum enim membra Christi ac de corpore efficimur Ecclesiae" (Denz. B., 696).

¹⁸Fulgentius, bishop of Ruspe in Sardinia (468-533), in his study *De fide ad Petrum* c. 37 PL 65, 703.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 704.

²⁰So wrote Pelagius II (pope c. 579-590) in the year 585 to the schismatic bishops of Isrtia, Denz. B. 246; PL 72, 709.

²¹Gregory the Great (pope 590-604) in his Commentary on Job, better known by the title *Moralia* (written in the year 595). Compare 1.35, c.8, a. 12.13; PL 76, 756f.

²²"We believe that the holy, catholic, apostolic Church is the true Church in which the one baptism and the true remission of sins are to be found." Letter *Congratulamur vehementer*, written by pope Leo IX in April 13, 1053, Denz. B. 347; Mansi, 19, 662.

"The universal Church of the believers is one, and outside her it is impossible to reach salvation." Chapter 1 of the Lateran Council, Denz. B. 430; Mansi 22, 982f.

²³Denz. B. 469; Hefele Leclercq 6, 427.

²⁴The teaching of Aquinas is here inconsistent. He said that there "is no possibility of reaching salvation outside of the church" (*extra ecclesiam nulli patet locus salutis*) *Opuscula XXIII*, in *Opera Omnia* (Rome, 1570), p. 17. But in *Quaestio disputata de veritate* q. xiv, a 11, ad 1^{um} wrote to the contrary that "a man growing in the woods" can reach salvation.

²⁵Denz. B. 86. This council was held during the reign of Siricius (pope 384-398).

²⁶The Council of Constantinople II (Oecumenical V) was held in the year 553. It excommunicated all the persons who would not condemn Arius, who was condemned by the "holy, catholic, apostolic church." Denz. B. 223.

²⁷Compare note 22. The same expression was repeated in the profession of faith by Clemens IV. Compare note 34.

²⁸November 18, 1302, "We must believe and admit the only, holy, catholic, apostolic church." (Denz. B. 468).

²⁹Included in the Letter *Inter ea quae* of April 2, 517 to the Spanish bishops. Denz. B. 172.

³⁰"We believe in the heart and profess with the mouth that the only church . . . is the holy, Roman, catholic, apostolic church; outside her men cannot reach salvation." From the letter *Eius exemplo* sent by Innocent III (pope 1198-1216) to the archbishop of Tarragona, December 18, 1203. Denz. B. 423.

³¹Denz. B. 361; Mansi 21, 282ff.

³²Council of Lateran IV (Oecumenical XIII) Year 1215. Ch. 3 *De haereticis* (Valdenses), Denz. B.; Mansi 22, 990.

³³Denz. B. 163; PL 59, 159; Mansi 8, 147. The authority of the pope is not definitely described herein. The sentence of Jesus is quoted only for asserting the greatness of the church of Rome to counteract the fact that the churches of Antioch and Alexandria ad-

duced for their greatness that Peter stayed there for some time or left there his disciple Mark.

³⁴Denz. B. 466; Mansi 24:70f. His profession of faith first was sent in 1267 by Clement IV (pope 1265-1266) to the emperor Michel VIII, the Paleologus (1261-1282), who, fearing the invasion of the French soldiers, asked to be reconciled with Rome (year 1263). The profession of faith was signed the year 1274 in the presence of Gregory IX during the council of Lyons by imperial legates, who were saved from a ship-wreck. The Greeks were allowed to maintain their liturgy, but accepted in their creed the addition "the Holy Spirit proceeds also from the son" (filioque) and admitted the supremacy of Rome. The opposition to it from the oriental clergy was very great. Michel was obliged to enforce this profession by arms. Compare C. Chapman, *Michel Paleologue*, (Paris 1926). The same profession was repeated by Urbanus VI in the year 1385.

³⁵The surname of "Vicar of Christ" is to be found first in the Bull of April 10, 1153 written by Eugen III (pope 1145-1153). Innocentius III (pope 1198-1216) used this title and Innocentius IV (pope 1243-1254) concluded from it that the pope is, as Jesus Christ, a king over the earthly kingdoms. Thomas Aquinas wrote however that the power, delivered by Christ to the pope must be found in the holy Bible and not in the analysis of the title "Vicar." Boniface VIII used it in the Bull *Unam Sanctam*, but the lawyer John of Paris, his contemporary, suggested the limitation "Vicar of Jesus Christ in spiritual things" be added. The Council of Florence (Oecumenical XVII, 1438-1445) decreed: "We decide that the pope of Rome is successor of Peter, the head of the apostles, and true vicar of Christ and the head of the whole church." Denz. B. 694. This surname did not appear in the Council of Trent, but is asserted by the Vatican Council (year 1870). Compare M. Maccarone, *Vicarius Christi. Storia del titolo papale Lateranum*, N. S. XVIII, (Rome, 1952).

³⁶The church is not a monster with two heads, but she has one body and one head, that is Jesus Christ and his vicar Peter with his successor, since the Lord said to Peter, "Feed my sheep." Denz. D. 468. This was uttered by pope Boniface VIII in the Bull *Unam Sanctam* of November 18, 1302.

³⁷About Juan de Torquemada (Turrecremata), a domenicane theologian and cardinal (1388-1468) see S. Lederer, *Der Spanische Card. Juan de Torquemada* (Freiburg 1879).

³⁸"The power of all the bishops of the Church . . . in its essence comes directly or indirectly from the power of the Roman pope," II, 55. The Biblical sentences (Gal. 2:9; 2 Cor. 10:13; Acts 20:28) which suppose that the power of the apostles and bishops come directly from God are considered by the cardinal Torquemada as an "exception" reserved to the apostolical time. The Council of Vatican sustained, on the contrary, that the power of the bishops comes directly from God.

³⁹Quod unicum est nomen in mundo, *Dictatus* 11, PL 148, 407.

⁴⁰Compare E. Eichnam, *Weihe und Kroenung des Papstes in Mittelalter*, (Muenich, 1951), pp. 28-32; 37-40; 56-57.

⁴¹For the beginning of the idea of the superiority of the council over the pope, compare Brian Tierney, *Foundations of the Conciliar theory. The contributions of Medieval Canonists from Gratian to the Great Schism*. (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, N. S. t. IV), Cambridge, 1955.

⁴²John the German (Johannis teutonicus), who in his glosse to the *Decree of Gratian* first asserted that "the council is superior to the pope." From this sentence some theologians and cardinals (e.g., Hen-

ricus hostiensis [Henry of Ostia, who died in 1271]) asserted that the pope must submit himself to the decrees of the councils. For this heresy of the pope, see under "The Infallible Teaching."

⁴³Marsilius of Padua (c. 1275-1342), scholar and political writer, president of the University of Paris, had two ecclesiastical benefices from John XXII. This pope condemned (Oct. 23, 1327) his doctrine (Denz. B. 495-500). Marsilius was the first who asserted the independency of the civil state from the church. See G. De Lagarde, *La naissance de l'esprit laïque*, t. II, *Marsile de Padoue or le premier theoricien de l'esprit laïque* (ed.2), Paris 1948; *Marsilio da Padova, Studi raccolti nel VI centenario della morte*, a cura di A. Cecchini e N. Bobbio, Padova 1942; G. de Simone, *Le dottrine politiche di Marsilio da Padova*, Roma 1942.

⁴⁴*Epistula pacis*, of the year 1379, and *Epistula concilli pacis*, 1381. (The supreme authority is for him in the community of Christian people.)

⁴⁵*Epistula brevis* (year 1379) and *Epistula concordiae* of the year 1380. (The supreme authority of the church is the council of the bishops.)

⁴⁶"It is clear that the whole is superior to the part . . . the pope is only a part of the council, as the head is a portion of the body," in *De Ecclesiae auctoritate*, printed in the *Gersonis opera*, vol. I (Paris 1606), p. 931. In a sermon preached in the Council of Constance he said that "only the universal church has the privilege of not erring." See J. P. Mac Gowan, *Pierre d'Ailly and the Council of Constance*, dissertation Washington Catholic Univ., 1936.

⁴⁷Jean le Charlier de Gerson (1363-1429) was chancellor of the University of Paris from the year 1395. His principal writings about this question are: *Quatuor considerationes de pace et unitate ecclesiae*, in *Opera Gersonis* I, Paris 1606, p. 250ff; *Triologus* (T. I, 291ff.), *De infallibilitate papae* (T. I, 154ff); *De unitate ecclesiastica* (T. I, 178ff); *De potestate ecclesiastica* (T. I, 110ff). Compare L. Salembier, "Gerson in *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique* VI, col. 1313-1330; M. J. Pinet, *La via ardente de Gerson*, Paris 1929; N. Valois, *La France et le grand schisme d'occident*, Vol. 4, Paris 1896-1902; V. Martin, *Comment s'est formee la doctrine de la superiorite, du Concile sur le Pape*, in "Revue de Sciences religieuses" 17 (1937) 121-143; 261-289; 405-426.

⁴⁸The council of Constance (Oecumenical XVI) was held in the year 1414-1418. After the renunciation of two popes (John XXIII and Gregory XII) the council deposed Benedicte XIII, who would not renounce his power, and elected as new pope Martin V (1417-1431). Compare L. Salembier, *Le grand schisme d'Occident*, Paris 1902.

The two decrees are to be read in *Hefele Leclercq* 7, 210f (Paris 1916). The theologians of Rome say that these decrees, made without the presence of the cardinals, are not valid, because they were not pronounced "conciliariter" (conciliarly). Eugene IV in the year 1466 accepted the decisions of the Council but "without any damage to the right, dignity, and supremacy of the apostolic church." But what judge will condemn himself?

⁴⁹The cardinal Nicholas Cusanus (1401-1464), who was very learned in the science, first taught the conciliar doctrine. He said in the council of Basel: "We rightly say all the apostles had the same power as Peter." Compare Von der Hardt, *Concil. Constant.* I, p. 5 c. 17 and 13. But in the year 1437 he left the council of Basel and began teaching a doctrine diametrically opposite to this. Indeed he did not recognize even the power of the bishops. Compare E. Vansterberghe, *Le Card. Nicolas de Cuse, L'action et la pensee*, (Paris 1920); R. Sabbadini, *Niccolo da Cusa ed i Conciliari di Ba-*

silea alla scoperta dei codici in "Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei" 5 Serie, year 20 (1910). The conciliar idea, asserted by the theologian of Paris, Almainus (*De auctoritate Ecclesiae*, in *Gersonis opera*, Paris 1606, p. 705ff), after its condemnation by the Lateran Council V, reappeared in the Gallicanism with E. Ritcher, Bossuet, and others.

⁵⁰The councils by excommunication of the disagreeing Christians were conscious of their infallibility.

⁵¹John of Damascus (about the year 730) in his *De imaginibus* (*Oratio* III, n. 41 PG 94, 1356) and the council of Nicea (II, Oecumenical VII, year 787) sustained the veneration of holy images by the tradition. Denz. B. 302. Lanfranc of Canterbury (died 1089) supported the dogma of transubstantiation by the same way (*De corpore et sanguine Domini*, c. 22, PL 150, 440). The council of Vienne (Oecumenical 15, 1311-1312) taught that by the tradition the human soul is the "form" of the body (Denz. B. 481). Thomas Aquinas (in *IV Sent.* 1, IV, Dist. XLV, c. II, a. 3 and in the passage quoted in footnote 56.) and Bonaventure (1221-1274, in *IV Sent.* 1, IV, Dist. 20, p. 2, q. 2) adduce the infallible tradition of the Church for supporting indulgences.

⁵²Hormisdas (pope 514-523) taught in the year 517 that "in the apostolical seat (of Rome) the true faith was maintained spotless" (Denz. B. 171; PL 63, 460. *Libellus Professionis fidei*, joined to the epistle *Inter ea quae* and sent to the bishops of Spain). Also Leo IX (pope 1049-1054) in his letter to John Nicopolis repeated that "in this apostolical seat the religion was ever maintained spotless" (PL 63, 393).

⁵³"This church, being grounded upon the firm rock of Peter, the prince of the apostles, by his help and grace perpetually remains without any error" (*apo pases planes achrantos diamenei*, PL 87, 1206f).

⁵⁴In his *Dictatus papae* he asserted "the church of Rome never erred in the past and never will err in the future according to the Biblical sentence (Luke 22:32) *quod romana ecclesia nunquam erravit, nec in perpetuum, scriptura testante, errabit*" PL 148, 408.

⁵⁵Leo IX (pope 1049-1054) in his letter *In terra pax hominibus*, sent to Michel Cerularius emperor of Constantinople Sept. 2, 1053, repeated that "the church (of Rome) will never be defeated by the opposition of heretical people" Denz. B. 350, PL 143, 748.

⁵⁶*In Sent.* 4, Dist. 20, q. 1, a. 3.

⁵⁷"This authority resides chiefly in the Supreme Pontif" *Sum. Theol.* p. II, 2ae, q. 11, a. 2 ad 3 um. Compare *Sum. Theol.* II, 2ae, q. 1, a. 10. "The authority of the pope must establish what are the articles of faith in order that all people can accept them by firm faith."

⁵⁸"It is necessary for unity that all Christian people be in full accord in the faith, but it is possible that about the truth of faith some questions can arise. The church will be divided because of diversity of opinions, if the unity is not sustained by the decision of one person. It is therefore necessary for the unity of the church, that one person must preside over the whole church." *Contra Gentes* IV, 76.

⁵⁹"the new edition of the profession of faith is necessary for eliminating the rising of errors." *Sum. Theol.* p. 11, 2ae, q. 1, a. 10.

⁶⁰"The veneration of saints is a profession of faith, because by it we believe in their glory. Therefore we must piously believe that in creating saints the judgment of the church is infalible." *Quodlibeta* 9, c. 16.

⁶¹"in the sentences regarding particular facts, as the possession of demons, crimes, or other similar things, it is possible for the church to err, because of the untruthfulness of the witnesses." *Quodlibeta* 9, c. 16.

⁶²Divis. 1, Dist. XL, c. 6, PL 187, 215.

⁶³Sermo II in *Consecratione Pontificis Maximi*, PL 217, 656.

⁶⁴But compare Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.* p. 11, 2ae, q. 39, a. 3. From the doctrine there asserted about a bishop who becomes heretical, we may conclude that an heretical man cannot be a true pope. But this conclusion is not explicitly asserted by Thomas.

⁶⁵Rufinus, who wrote about 1155-1159, said that the pope can be judged only for sins committed against the whole church, but not for those against one or more," in *Summa Decretorum*, published by H. Singer, Paderhorn, 1902.

⁶⁶Heresy is "the only sin concerning which the pope may be judged" said Henry de Segusio (d. 1271); Compare *Summa Lipsiensis* written before 1190.

⁶⁷"The first seat cannot be judged by someone, except the pope obstinately errs in the faith."

⁶⁸Huguccio died in the year 1210. The quotations before, adduced are to be found in *Diction. de Theologie Catholique*, "Infallibilite du pape," Vol. VII (Paris, 1922), col. 1714-15. Compare also Fr. Shulte, *Die Stellung der Concilien, Paepste und Bischoefe*, (Prague, 1871), p. 188-205, 253-268.

⁶⁹*Summa de Ecclesia*, II, c. 112 ed. Venice, p. 259 But if this possibility is true, it would be necessary that a general council judge each papal decree in order to know whether this is heretical and therefore not papal or true and therefore papal. The same sentence was asserted also by the Cardinal Caietan, *De romani pontificis institutione et auctoritate*, c. XIII, (Turin, 1582), p. 93.

⁷⁰A. Diegel, *Der Paepstliche Einfluss auf die Bischofswahlen in Deutschland waehrend dem 13 Jahr.h.s.*, (1932; J. B. Saegmueller), *Die visitatio liminum bis Bonifaz VIII*, In *Theologische Quartalsschrift*, 1900, p. 69-117.

⁷¹*Dictatus papae* 16, PL 148, 407.

⁷²"Nobody dare to venerate openly the new relics, without the precedent approval by the pope of Rome," Denz. B. 440, Mansi 22, 1049.

⁷³*Dictatus* 20, PL 148, 408.

⁷⁴*De consideratione*, this book was written in the years 1152-53.

⁷⁵Denz. B. 466.

⁷⁶*Dictatus* 18, PL 148, 408.

⁷⁷Epist. 8, *Proposueramus ad Michelem imperatorem* sent in the year 865 by Nicholas I, 858-868. The adduced decisions are those of Council of Sardica (343) often quoted by Rome as the decrees of Council of Nicea.

⁷⁸This was established by a decree about the election of the pope during the Lateran Council in April 1059. It was probably written by Humbert, the adviser of Nicholas II (1058-1061). Compare *Decretum Gratiani* c.I, Dist. XXIII PL 187, 127-129. The III Lateran Council of 1179 (oecumenical XI) in the 1 decree (Licet de evitanda) decided that it was necessary for the validity of the election of the pope to have 2/3 of the votes. Mansi 22, 224f, Hefele-Leclercq 5 (Paris 1913) 1087.

⁷⁹Useful for this purpose is the *Liber Censuum Romanae Ecclesiae*, written by the papal treasurer Cencio Savelli, then pope Onorius III. This book was printed by P. Fabre and L. Duchesne, 2 Voll., (Paris, 1889-1952). Compare L. Nina, *Le Finanze pontificie nel Medioevo*, 3

voll. (Milano, 1929-1932); W. E. Lunt, *Papal revenue in the Middle Age*, 2 Voll., (New York, 1934).

⁸⁰E. Goeller, *Die paepstliche Penitentiariae bis Pius V*, 2 voll., (Rome, 1907-1911).

⁸¹"The ecclesiastical discipline submits the Christian people to the ecclesiastical judgment, without bloody punishments, said pope Leo, but the constitutions of the princes helped the church in this chastisement, because physical punishment is a salutary remedy" Council of Laterani III, 1179 (oecumenical XI) made in Rome in the time of Lucius (pope 1181-1185). Denz. B. 401; Mansi, 22, 231.

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The Concept of the Church in the Reformation Movement

David H. Bobo

Just when, where, and with whom did the Reformation Movement begin? This question has never been answered with finality and to the satisfaction of all, and perhaps never will be. But it is equally true that on all hands the name of Martin Luther pretty much dominates the Reformation scene and more than any other symbolizes the whole movement. We could therefore find no more proper center around which to work than that of Martin Luther, with other key figures duly related to him. And so we begin our search for the Reformation concept of the church with him. But even here to appreciate Luther's concept we do best so consider it in contrast with the prevailing Roman Catholic concept from which Luther was driven to revolt.

Further, in contrasting these two concepts we shall find the distinction not so much in formal or verbal definition as in the points of emphasis, the centers of gravity, or the location of the basic essence. Both Catholics and Lutherans doubtless could and largely did accept the same formal definitions. Yet conceptually and essentially they were far apart. While the Roman Catholics recognized the church as the communion of the saints (*communio sanctorum*), they still found the center of gravity and basic essence of the church in the authentic clergy or hierarchy functioning in the due celebration of the sacraments.¹ Around this everything else clustered and to this everything else was subordinated. In this sense the church actually centered in and orbited around the papacy. To Luther, on the other hand, the essence of the church was to be found in the unity or communion of believers in Christ. He too believed that a proper ministry and administration of the sacraments were important, but he did not see them as the very essence of the church. Thus both Catholics and Reformers believed in the ministry and sacraments, and both likewise believed in the communion of believers, but each saw a different feature as the essential principle in which the church consists. Neither our subject nor our space permits an exploration of the tendencies natural to the Roman Catholic concept, but it was the full development of those tendencies which brought about the situation which led to the revolt and reformation.

Communion of Saints

Luther significantly reveals his concept of the church in his translation of the Greek word *ekklesia*. He disliked the word *church* (Ger-

man, Kirche) because it did not convey the real meaning of *ekklesia*. He says:

Well then, setting aside many writings and many divisions of the word church, we will this time stay by the Children's Creed, which says, "I believe one holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints." There the creed indicates clearly what the Church is, namely, "a communion of saints," that is, a group or assembly of such people as are Christians and holy. That is a Christian, holy group, or Church. But this word "church" is not German and does not convey the sense or idea that is to be taken from this article.²

He consistently translated *ekklesia* by the German word *Gemeine*, which means *congregation*. Thus *ekklesia* was recognized by him as meaning not a vertical line or scale of authority, or a tightly knit hierarchy, but rather a horizontal line or plane of brethren in the faith assembled together in a communion and fellowship.

In the matter of definition, such expressions as that "all the saints are members of Christ and of the church,"³ and that "the Church is the community of all Christians,"⁴ abound throughout Luther's writings. But perhaps his fullest statement of his concept of the church is in his exposition of his preferred version of the Apostles Creed in which he says:

This means—I believe that there is on earth, through the whole wide world, no more than one holy, common, Christian Church, which is nothing else than the congregation, or assembly of the saints, i.e., the pious, believing men on earth, which is gathered, preserved, and ruled by the Holy Ghost, and daily increased by means of the sacraments and the word of God.

I believe that no one can be saved who is not found in this congregation, holding with it to one faith, word, sacraments, hope and love, and that no Jew, heretic, heathen or sinner can be saved along with it, unless he become reconciled to it, united with it and conformed to it in all things.⁵

But it must be remembered that it is not just the aggregation of the saints which constitutes the church, but the fellowship or communion of the saints. On this point he goes on to say:

I believe that in this congregation, or Church, all things are common, that everyone's possessions belong to the others and no one has anything of his own; therefore, all the prayers and good works of the whole congregation must help, assist and strengthen me and every believer at all times, in life and death, and thus each bear the other's burden, as St. Paul teaches.⁶

Luther never taught the pooling of possessions but simply the holding of everyone's possessions as subject to the needs of every other Christian as a matter and expression of fellowship. Even here, however, the fellowship is far more spiritual than material in nature.

Obviously Luther is here speaking of the church in its universal, or, as he says, its inner, spiritual, or invisible sense. He enlarges and clarifies as he says on this point:

This community or assembly consists of all those who live in true faith, hope and love; so that the essence, life and nature of the Church is not a bodily assembly, but an assembly

of hearts in one faith, as St. Paul says, Ephesians iv, "One baptism, one faith, one Lord." Thus, though they be a thousand miles apart in body, yet they are called an assembly in spirit because each one preaches, believes, hopes, loves, and lives like the other. So we sing of the Holy Ghost: "Thou, who through divers tongues gatherest together the nations in the unity of the faith." That means in reality a spiritual unity, because of which men are called a communion of saints. And this unity is of itself sufficient to make a church, and without it no unity, be it of place, of time, of person, of work, or of whatever else, makes a Church.⁷

So far as definitions are concerned Luther always thinks and speaks in terms of the ideal or universal church. In fact his aversion to the term "Roman" seems to have driven him to a violent antipathy toward any local definition of the church. In one place he seems to be denying the propriety of ever using the term church in a local sense,⁸ but here, as in the quotation above, he is perhaps only saying that locality has nothing to do with the essence of the church, and not that the church has no local entity or sense. On the other hand, though he evinces no theory and states no definition of the local church, as a matter of practical necessity and fact he must and does speak freely of congregational matters. But it is almost grudgingly and contemptuously that he at times speaks of that which he calls the external, visible, and bodily assembly. It is the situation which gives rise to worldly pride and ambition and most of the abuses and corruptions which he has viewed with such horror in the Roman church. This may also have something to do with his comparatively small regard for certain features of this visible church and his lack of commitment to a complete return to the New Testament pattern, which he never professed to do.⁹ Yet on those points in which he felt that the inner and spiritual and essential nature of the church was involved he spoke out strongly. These involved church government, ministry, and the Lord's supper (the communion in both the bread and the cup). In such matters he was distinctly congregational in theory and sentiment, and regarded the local church as possessing in itself all the rights and powers inherent in and properly belonging to the church. In fact he speaks of it as the church when he quotes Jesus in Matthew 18:17 as follows: "If he will not hear them, then tell it unto the whole congregation, the Church."¹⁰ With regard to the ministry and government of the church it goes without saying that he denounced the papacy in the strongest possible terms, as he did also cardinals, archbishops, etc. In the matter of bishops, deacons, etc., he contended for the right of each congregation to determine its own ministry. One of his early writings, entitled: "The Right and Power of a Christian Congregation or Community to Judge All Teaching and to Call, Appoint, and Dismiss Teachers, Established and Proved from Scripture,"¹¹ is devoted wholly to that point.

In the matter of the ministry Luther was not very clear or consistent. Basic in his concept was the universal priesthood of believ-

ers. Every Christian is a priest and has a right to preach and teach the word of God.¹² As in all the ministry, necessity is the dictating rule. Where one is the only Christian, or in a congregation in which a teacher is teaching error, any Christian who knows the truth should demand opportunity and speak the truth. But where there is a congregation, however small, one should be chosen to minister the word and sacrament to the rest, and this choice is always to be made by the congregation itself.¹³ The office of preaching is to Luther the highest office in the church and is the proper work of the priest (presbyter),¹⁴ which originally was and properly is the same as the bishop,¹⁵ though he sometimes speaks of a bishop having presbyters and deacons under him.¹⁶ He thinks it apostolic and ideal for each town (assuming only one congregation of Christians in each town) to have a bishop, indicating one bishop for each congregation.¹⁷ Deacons he defines as ministers for distributing the church's alms to the poor.¹⁸ But in any case these ministers must be selected and appointed by the congregations which they are to serve. The extent of the ministry is to be determined by the necessity of the situation. Luther's regard for practical necessity was prominent in his attitude toward and dealing with such matters as pertained to what he regarded as the external or visible church. It was this regard for necessity which caused him to acquiesce in the formula of Speier: "Cuius regio, eius religio" (Whose-ever is the region, his is the religion).¹⁹ This is the principle which established the state churches and made the civil rulers the rulers and guardians of religion. In such rulers Luther saw what he termed *Notbischofe* (necessity bishops).²⁰ But in this Luther rather yielded to something against his expressed concept than displayed his real idea of the church.²¹

In worship also Luther was congregational in concept and sentiment. In the matter of communion he argued for the participation of the whole congregation in both the bread and the cup,²² and in the singing, as in the right of ministry of the word, he contended for the participation of all.²³

Constitutive Principle

What was the constituting principle of the church with Luther? This he answers repeatedly throughout his works. To him the Word of God was the underlying, constituting, and sustaining principle of the church as contrasted with the principle of hierarchical and sacerdotal authority of the Roman church. This is set forth in his words: "Tota vita et substantia ecclesiae est in verbo Dei" (The whole life and substance of the church is in the word of God).²⁴ Enlarging somewhat on that he says again: "Wherever, therefore, you hear or see this Word preached, believed, confessed, and acted on, there do not doubt that there must be a true *ecclesia sancta catholica*, a Christian, holy people, even though it be small in numbers."²⁵ The principle of acceptance and application of the word

of God he asserts as follows: "Where there is a divine promise every one must stand upon his own feet, every one's personal faith is demanded, every one will give an account for himself and will bear his own burden, as it is said in the last chapter of Mark: 'He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned'."²⁶ Acceptance therefore must be on the basis of personal faith, though this involves Luther in difficulty in regard to infant baptism. The active avowal of this faith and acceptance of God's word is made in baptism, which act constitutes one a Christian and a priest.²⁷ It is therefore the first mark of the church, as Luther says: "The external marks, whereby one can perceive where the Church is on earth, are baptism, the Sacrament, and the gospel; and not Rome, or this place, or that."²⁹ Repeatedly he declares that it is in baptism that one is saved, enters the church and the new life, etc.²⁹

As for the governing influence of the word of God in the church the views of Luther are a bit equivocal. Certainly he avows submission to the word in all matters of faith and practice, though he countenances practices for which he can produce no scriptural warrant. He says clearly, however: "We ought to see to it that every article of faith of which we boast be certain, pure, and based on clear passages of Scripture."³⁰ And to those who would exalt the will of the church above the word of God he says:

But the church owes its life to the word of promise through faith, and is nourished and preserved by this same word. That is to say, the promises of God make the Church, not the Church the promise of God. For the Word of God is incomparably superior to the Church, and in this Word the Church, being a creature, has nothing to decree, ordain or make, but only to be decreed, ordained, and made.³¹

Finally, in commenting on Deuteronomy Luther expressed the idea that for one to act in ever so good a matter and manner without the express command of God is to act or worship in vain. Here he says:

The Psalter, too, and all the prophets lament that the people are doing good works that they themselves have chosen and that were not commanded by God. He cannot and will not suffer those who are His to undertake to do anything that He has not commanded, no matter how good it may be; for obedience, which depends on God's Word, is of all works the noblest and best.³²

And so we have a brief sketch of Luther's concept of the church as a fellowship or communion of saints, who are so on the basis of their own individual faith and action in response to the word of God and governed by the word of God alone, with each congregation free to govern its own affairs and determine its own ministry, and with every member a priest and a minister to serve as ability may allow and necessity dictate.

John Calvin

Second only to Luther in stature and importance in the Reformation movement is John Calvin. In most of his concept of the church, he agreed with Luther and may be thought of as largely following Luther, though with greater clarity and finesse of statement.

Calvin, like Luther, turned to the Apostles Creed for his definition of the church, and both defended and employed the phrase "Communion of Saints."³³ He uses more freely than Luther the terms "visible" and "invisible" church, and, because of his emphasis upon divine election, had more cause to. On the general character and basis of the church he uses almost the exact language of Luther, saying: "For wherever we find the word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ, there, it is not to be doubted, is a church of God."³⁴ He too conceived of the church as not only the exclusive realm but also in some sense the means of salvation, and this he declares with regard to the visible church.³⁵ On the ministry he, like other Reformers, was somewhat groping and uncertain. He regards bishops, elders, pastors, and ministers as the same, sees them as the rulers of single congregations, and, though he mentions instances in which Paul spoke of a plurality of bishops in one congregation, generally regards one bishop for each congregation acceptable.³⁶ In the diaconate he sees two groups, or, more properly, deacons and deaconesses, the former to distribute the alms of the church and the latter to care for the poor and sick.³⁷

Calvin sees two constitutive principles working together to form and maintain the church—the divine election, and the call and power of the word. Divine election to him is basically God's ability to see what the human eye cannot—the innermost hearts and characters of men. Therefore God alone can know the truly acceptable and distinguish them from the world, or even from the hypocritical in the visible church. And so he says: "But because a small and contemptible number is concealed among a vast multitude, and a few grains of wheat are covered with a heap of chaff, we must leave to God alone the knowledge of his Church whose foundation is his secret election."³⁸ Yet it is called out and distinguished by faith in the gospel or word of God.³⁹ The word of God must be the ruling influence, and the rule of Christ "ought to be exercised and administered solely by his word."⁴⁰ Of the Roman church he says:

Although they may pretend therefore to the temple, the priesthood, and other similar forms, this vain glitter, which dazzles the eyes of the simple, ought by no means to induce us to admit the existence of a Church, where we cannot discover the word of God. For this is the perpetual mark by which our Lord has characterized his people.⁴¹

Limiting church activity to what the word prescribes he says: "And if we presumptuously attempt any thing without his command, the evil beginning is immediately succeeded by further inventions, which

multiply the mischief without end."⁴² It is by faith in the gospel and baptism that people accept the word of God and are constituted in the church.⁴³

Calvin, like the other reformers, found it easy to confuse the church with civil government, perhaps largely through the force of what seemed a necessity.

Ulrich Zwingli

Ulrich Zwingli was cut off while still in the ascent of his power and before his theology found as full expression as was given to Luther's and Calvin's, and to repeat what we do know would be almost a repetition of that of Luther and Calvin. Among his sixty-seven Conclusions, a sort of summary of his reformation principles, he says in Conclusions 7 and 8:

Christ is the head of all believers who are his body; but without him the body is dead.

All who live in this Head are his members and children of God. And this is the Church, the communion of saints, the bride of Christ, the *ecclesia catholica*.⁴⁴

And so he conceived of the church as the communion of saints, and all who are in Christ or the totality of the saved. He regarded the word of God in the scriptures as the sole and sufficient rule of Christian faith and practice.⁴⁵

Reformers Before the Reformation

The road to Reformation was blazed and to some extent paved by pioneers who did much to suggest to the classical reformers the concepts they held. Among these was John Wyclif of England. He defined the church as "the body of the elect,—living, dead and not yet born,—whose head is Christ."⁴⁶ He strongly repudiated the idea of a priestly or hierarchical basis for the church. John Huss likewise pioneered with such expressions as:

The Holy Catholic Church is the body or congregation of all the predestinate, the dead, the living and those yet to be. The term 'catholic' means universal. The unity of the Church is a unity of predestination and of blessedness, a unity of faith, charity and grace.⁴⁷

At the council of Constance he said: "If the Church be the company of the elect, then God rules in his people and they are sovereign."⁴⁸

And so, except for the emphasis upon divine election and predestination, all these leaders of the Reformation Movement held basically the same concept of the church as did Luther. And, being the Augustinian that he was, and when both he and they are properly understood, he perhaps did not differ greatly with the rest on this point. And so he still pretty much stands in the center.

¹Compare Wilhelm Pauck, *The Heritage of the Reformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950), pp. 26-27.

²*Works of Martin Luther with Introductions and Notes* (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1915), V, 264

³*Ibid.*, II, 10.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 47. ⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 373. ⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*, I, 349. ⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 354-355. ⁹*Pauck*, *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

¹⁰*Works*, II, 39. ¹¹*Ibid.*, IV, 75-85. ¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 79-80. ¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 82-85. ¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 283. ¹⁵*Ibid.*, II, 119. ¹⁶*Ibid.* ¹⁷*Ibid.* ¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 283.

¹⁹Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), VI, 685. For fuller discussion see also Lewis W. Spitz, "Luther's Ecclesiology and His Concept of the Prince as Notbischof," *Church History*, Vol. XXII (1953), pp. 113-141.

²⁰*Works*, IV, 74. ²¹*Ibid.* ²²*Ibid.*, II, 178 et passim.

²³*Ibid.*, VI, 98 et passim. ²⁴Quoted by *Pauck*, *Op. cit.*, p. 28.

²⁵*Works*, V, 271. ²⁶*Ibid.*, II, 209. ²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 66. ²⁸*Ibid.*, I, 361.

²⁹*Ibid.*, II, 220. ³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 273. ³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 273-274.

³²*Ibid.*, VI, 371.

³³John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936), II, 272.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 281.

³⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 273-274. ³⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 324-325. ³⁷*Ibid.* ³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 271.

³⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 269, 281. ⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 316. ⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 307.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 278. ⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 583. ⁴⁴*Schaff*, *Op. cit.*, VII, 52.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 90. ⁴⁶*Ibid.*, V, part ii, 330-331. ⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 368.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p. 385.

The Doctrine of the Church in the Writings of Alexander Campbell¹

Everett Ferguson

The emphases of Mr. Campbell and the Restoration Movement of which he was the leading figure in the first half of the nineteenth century have been stated according to a traditional classification: the ultimate principle was the conversion of the world to Christ; the material principle for achieving this goal was the union of all Christians; and the formal principle for attaining this union was the restoration of primitive Christianity as set forth in the New Testament.² From the beginning of the movement two emphases have been in tension the one with the other—unionism and restorationism.

The emphasis upon Christian unity in the writings of Alexander Campbell is readily apparent. He found a real and visible unity described in the Scriptures. The following statement from the *Millennial Harbinger* is representative of many:

There is but one real Kingdom of Christ in the world, and that is equivalent to affirming that there is but one Church of Christ in the world. As to an invisible church in a visible world, schoolmen may debate about it till doom's day, but we know nothing of an invisible church in our portion of creation.³

In the same context it is stated that "it is, then, a fixed fact of Christianity, that Jesus Christ has but one church, or kingdom, in this world, and that this church is composed of all the communities properly called the church of Christ."

The restoration of New Testament Christianity was the method advocated by Campbell to achieve unity. His use of the Bible in this regard represented his distinctive contribution. The following quotation from one of the historians of the Disciples will make Campbell's method clear:

Attempts had been made, to be sure, to deduce from the Scriptures complete systems of theology, and to make these the bases of successive reformations of the church. But his own movement differed from these in seeking for the authoritatively given conditions of salvation and making these alone, as the essentials of Christianity, the basis of the unity of the church. There may be differences of theory about the facts of the Gospel, but the facts themselves are sure. There may be differences of interpretation in regard to many doctrines taught in the Bible, but, when all prejudices and preconceived opinions have been set aside, there is little room for differences in regard to the few simple commands, obedience to which was the only condition of entrance to the church in the days of the apostles.

Stated in a word, his method of effecting the reconciliation between the liberty of the individual and the unity of the whole body, was a return to authority for essentials and the admission of individual differences in non-essentials.⁴

Others, too, had sought a distinction between essentials and non-essentials. Campbell said men must let the New Testament determine what constitutes the essentials. The preaching of the apostles of Christ makes clear that these are the conditions of salvation.⁵

Some have felt that there was an inconsistency between Campbell's attack on theology and his own elaboration of a system of doctrine, between his attack on creeds and his teaching that immersion was a condition of admission to the kingdom.⁶ However, Campbell's theology was intended to remain *his* theology, and not become the theology of a denomination nor the basis of Christian union. Furthermore, in a movement for reunion on the basis of the original conditions of fellowship it was not felt inconsistent to grant the Christian name to others even if they were not admissible as members of a movement to unite the church on the basis indicated.⁷

When Campbell's movement took organized form, he looked to the Biblical doctrine of the church as a norm and a practical basis of polity. In surveying some of his teachings on the subject of the church this paper will show the result of the application of his brilliant capacity for generalization and illustration to the fruits of Biblical exegesis. It is proposed to examine Campbell's doctrine of the church under the three heads of the nature, organization, and functions of the church.

The nature of the church is presented in relation to the kingdom of God, in terms of its membership, and as a divine creation.

"In the systematizing of Mr. Campbell's doctrinal ideas, the central place must be given to his idea of the Kingdom of God."⁸ The doctrine of the Church must be placed in this larger context, for it is always defined in relation to the kingdom of God.⁹ God has always had and always will have a kingdom. The kingdom of God in Old Testament days was the Jewish theocracy. Coming to the New Testament, Campbell thought Matthew's preference for "kingdom of heaven" instead of "kingdom of God" was meant to contrast the institution which Jesus was going to set up with the earthly kingdom of God of which the Jews were so long in possession.¹⁰ The kingdom was not to be, in any sense of the term, an earthly reign of Christ, but rather a wonderful new spiritual institution, His own divine creation. The distinction between church and kingdom is to be found in the fact that kingdom is a wider term, including God's government in all ages and those who were subject to it—patriarchs, faithful Jews, Christians, and infants.

The communities collected and set in order by the Apostles were called the *congregations of Christ*, and these taken together are sometimes called *the Kingdom of God*. But the phrases "*church of God*," or "*congregation of Christ*," and the

phrases "Kingdom of Heaven," or "Kingdom of God," do not always nor exactly represent the same thing. The elements of the Kingdom of Heaven, it will be remembered, are not simply its subjects, and therefore not simply the congregation of disciples of Christ. But as these communities possess the oracles of God, are under the laws and institutions of the King, and therefore enjoy the blessings of the present salvation, they are in the records of the Kingdom regarded as the only constitutional citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven; and to them exclusively belongs *the present salvation*.¹¹

The essential elements of a kingdom as existing among men are stated to be five, viz.: "King, Constitution, Subjects, Laws, and Territory."¹² Since the "Church" designates those who are now subject to the institutions of Christ, the terms church and kingdom become practically interchangeable for the Christian age, and it is under the figure of a kingdom that Mr. Campbell most frequently sets forth the essential characteristics of the Christian Dispensation. It is in terms of membership that the Church coincides with the effective kingdom of God, as executed through Christ, in the present day, and to this topic we must return. The Lordship of Christ as a King is frequently emphasized by Campbell, particularly in the context of organization. At this point, one general statement about the subjects and their King in the kingdom of heaven is offered, in anticipation of the fuller statements later.

The Christian brotherhood or community is set forth under the figure of a body, a family, a nation, or kingdom. Under all these figures Christ is the head and his people are his body, his family, his kingdom. They indeed are not contemplated without him, nor he without them, under any figure (1 Cor. 12:12ff; Eph. 1:23; Rom. 12:5; Eph. 2:21; 4:4). All, then, who are of the one faith, under the one Lord, and subjects of the one baptism, animated by the one Spirit and hope, make but one body or church.¹³

Those bound to Christ by no other bond than personal allegiance live within a Constitutional Kingdom, founded upon the New Covenant of Jesus Christ, which was delivered to men through the preaching of the Apostles; they are under the Laws of the Kingdom, the essential feature of which is a law of Love. Their present territory is the world, where they wage war with the forces of evil, but they are heirs of Heaven.¹⁴ "The first community of this sort was that formed in Jerusalem" with the events described in Acts 2.¹⁵

The aspect of church membership was the central burden of most of Campbell's study, debates, and writing, for it is in terms of membership (the subjects of the kingdom) that his doctrine of the church touches most intimately his conception of Christian unity. An explicit statement of his conception of the nature of the Church and its membership is found in the answers to a series of "questions on the church."

Q What is *the church* of Christ?

A The congregation of saints on earth and in heaven.

Q What is meant by *a church* of Christ?

A An assembly of persons meeting stately in one place; built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus himself the chief cornerstone.

Q Who are the members of a church of Christ?

A Those only who voluntarily and joyfully submit to him as lawgiver, prophet, priest, and king: who assume him as their Saviour, die to sin, are buried with him, and rise to walk in new life.

Q What is the Constitution of the Church?

A Paul describes it in Heb. 8.

Q Are no other articles of confederation necessary?

A None for a *Christian* congregation. Jesus is king and lawgiver.

Q How are the articles of the Christian Constitution acceded to and adopted?

A In one's immersion into the death and Resurrection of the Lord.

Q Does this make them members of every Christian community?

A No: Their particular membership in any one community is an after act. It depends on location, application, and reception.

Q Can any Christian congregation refuse to receive any citizen of the Kingdom?

A No; unless he act in a manner unworthy of a citizen.¹⁶ In an "Extra" printed with the *Millennial Harbinger* Campbell speaks on the "Formation of a Church."

The materials of a church are regenerated men and women—disciples of Christ. By regenerated persons we mean those born of water and the Spirit—those who, believing that Jesus is the Son of God on the proper evidence, the witness of the Spirit, penitent for their sins, understanding his blood as the only procuring cause of remission, and determined to obey the Lord in all things according to his word; such persons having confessed the Lord by being immersed into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit according to his commandment, are the proper materials for the congregation of the Lord.

. . . . They pledge themselves to one another in the name of the Lord, that they will walk together as becometh saints in the relation of a Christian congregation.

. . . . It is enough that they give themselves to one another by some token or pledge—"the right hand of fellowship," or some such significant action. . . .¹⁷

The fact that the church is a divine creation gives it its distinctive nature. Writing on the "Kingdom of Heaven" in the *Christian System* Campbell speaks as follows:

So Jesus in the new creation, by his Spirit sent down from heaven after his glorification, did, by a positive, direct, and immediate agency, create one congregation, one mystical or spiritual body; and, according to the constitution or system of the Kingdom of Heaven, did give to that mystical body, created in Jerusalem out of the more ancient earthly Kingdom of God, the power of reproducing and multiplying to an indefinite extent. But still this new and spiritual life is transmitted, diffused, and sustained by the Spirit of God, operating through

the constitution, or system of grace, ordained in the Kingdom of Heaven.¹⁸

It is this divine origin that explains the wonderful display of divine power and makes appropriate the supernatural acts associated with the ministry of Jesus and the early preaching of the Apostles. That the church is divine in source of origin is made particularly prominent in speaking of the time when the church began: "The Christian Church, called the Kingdom or Reign of Heaven, was organized by the descent of the Holy Spirit on the first Pentecost after the sacrifice of Christ."¹⁹

From the great deal which Mr. Campbell wrote on the organization of the church three topics will be selected: the divinely given organization; this within the pattern of congregational independence; and the role of the ministry in the organization.

Alexander Campbell was not satisfied with any definition of the church which left it an amorphous, or mystical, concept. The very idea of "church" meant an organized body.

Either there is, or there is not, a Christian system of church organization. If there be no Divinely instituted system of church organization, there must be a human system or there is no system at all! Has the King of the kingdom of heaven himself laid down no system of organization? Then he has no kingdom of heaven—no church on earth! He may have a people, but, without organization, he can have neither church nor kingdom, for those terms indicate organized bodies.²⁰

Fairly early in the *Christian Baptist* he took sharp issue with a Baptist correspondent who felt that church government is largely left to human discretion:

You say that "church government" is obviously left by the Bible for the exercise of much discretion. How this can be I cannot conjecture. Whatever is left for the exercise of much discretion is obviously a discretionary thing. If, therefore, church government be a matter obviously of human discretion, I see not how any form of church government, though principally of human contrivance, such as the Papistical or Episcopalian, can be condemned. . . . If there be no divine law enjoining any form of church government, if there be no divinely authorized platform exhibited in the Bible, then why have the Baptists contended for the independent form, except they suppose that they have more discretion than their neighbors?²¹

The reason for Campbell's strong language here is found in the fact that by "church government" he meant the prerogative of Christ, and Christ alone, to lay down rules for the church. There was no place for human law-making in the church of Christ. In the same article he adds this statement:

I find, therefore, that the Lord Jesus is the Governor, and the 12 apostles under him, sitting upon 12 thrones, constitute the government of the church of Jesus Christ. I know that synods and advisory councils have a right to govern voluntary associations, which owe their origin to the will of men; but in

the church of Jesus the 12 apostles reign.²²

The figure of a kingdom is taken by Mr. Campbell as normative for his declarations on the subject of church organization.

That as the church, or congregation, or assembly (as it is expressed by all these names) is repeatedly called a *kingdom*—the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven, it is fairly to be presumed, from the terms themselves, that the government under which the church is placed, is an *absolute monarchy*. There cannot be a kingdom unless there be a *king*. . . . On this, as a first principle, I found all my views of what is commonly called *church government*.

In every congregation or community of Christians the persons that are appointed by the Great King to rule, act pretty much in the capacity of our civil magistrates; or in other words, they have only to see that the laws are obeyed, but have no power or right to legislate in any one instance for any one purpose.

There is no democracy or aristocracy in the governmental arrangements of the church of Jesus Christ. . . . So that there is no putting the question to vote whether they shall obey any particular law or injunction. Their rulers or bishops have to give an account of their administration, and have only to see that the laws are known and obeyed.²³

After reading such statements it is clear why Campbell could speak of the government of the Church as a "Christocracy."²⁴

Although the preceding statements have reference to government as laying down authoritative statements of doctrine, the same principles led Mr. Campbell to insist upon a Biblical basis for church organization. All figures—building and body included—point to the same government and organization.

"It was a Divine, spiritual, and neither a human nor a political organization." He disavowed any intention of placing polity over faith, but he did regard polity as essential to the carrying out of the content of faith. "I have always been a pleader for organization; still organization is not faith, nor humility, nor liberality. . . . No community in America or Europe is better organized than the Roman Church."²⁵ Still the necessity and importance of organization are not detracted by the prior need of faith, intelligence, liberality, and zeal to accomplish anything.

The matter of actually organizing communities of his followers raised a question of the relation of these communities to the total number of Christians. Were there Christians in the sects he so roundly denounced, and if so did this not introduce the element of an invisible church into his thinking? This was treated as a purely practical problem. The fractured body of Christ must be made one; he was creating a nucleus around which that restored unity could form. Various questions raised on this theme are answered in the following passage, which is followed by an important declaration of the church as essentially a social institution.

Q Do you place all the sects in the apostacy?

A Yes, all religious sects who have any human bond of

union; all who rally under any articles of confederation other than the apostles' doctrine, and who refuse to yield homage to the ancient order of things.

Q Are there no disciples of Christ in these communities?

A There are, no doubt, many.

Q How can the communities be in the apostacy?

A There are republicans in England and monarchists in America. So there being Christians in any sectarian commonwealth or a sectarian in any Christian commonwealth does not change the character of such a commonwealth.

Since the very existence of sects is sinful, he states that it is the duty of sincere Christians to "come out" (Rev. 18:4). Then he continues as follows:

Cannot a person be a Christian and live out of all Christian fellowship?

If banished to a Patmos or bound in a prison. But he cannot voluntarily hold aloof because Christianity is a social religion in ordinances, duties and privileges—Heb. 10.²⁶

In discussing the present administration of the kingdom of heaven on earth, organization as distinguished from government, Mr. Campbell was accustomed to lump Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Independent forms together and reject them all. He notes that each of the three traditional systems as they developed historically were modelled after and assimilated to different forms of civil government.²⁷ However, it is clear that his position belongs within the Independent, or Congregational, pattern. In the proper sense, he says, the organization is Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational all three.²⁸ He found the word *ekklesia* used in the singular in two distinct senses—indicating a single community meeting in a single place and the congregated multitude of all these communities as existing in all ages and nations. One also reads of churches in political districts, but never of a church in or of any province or district.²⁹ Mr. Campbell's congregationalism is evident in the following passage:

A church of Christ is a single society of believing men and women, stately meeting in one place, to worship God through the one Mediator. But a church of churches, or a church collective of all the churches in a state, or a nation, is an institution of man, and not an ordinance of God.

Nothing in the constitution of a church of Christ is more evident than its individual responsibility to the Lord Jesus Christ, for all its acts and deeds.³⁰

Another statement may also be quoted:

This body of Christ, composed of all possessed of the same faith, piety, and humanity, so far as it is found at any one time existing on this earth, is composed of many communities or congregations, each of which is in itself and to the members of which it is composed, a miniature or the individual representation of the whole body or church of Christ in the world.³¹

Since Christ is the sole Lawgiver and ultimately the Judge, the officers of the Christian communities could only perform the functions of heralds, declaring the law of the King, and administrators, seeing that His law was executed. Ephesians 4 was the *locus classicus* for Campbell's pronouncements on the subject of the ministry, and from this passage he emphasized that the ministry was a divine gift to the Church, instituted in the divine origin of the church.³² A two-fold distinction was made between the classes of ministers placed in the church. The first distinction was between extraordinary and ordinary ministers, or between those temporarily placed on the earth and those permanently identified with the church.

The officers of the Christian Church may be arranged under two general classes—the ordinary and the extraordinary. The extra-ordinary officers were Apostles and Prophets; the ordinary, evangelists, bishops, and deacons.

Apostles and Prophets we have in the Book as the foundation of the church—just as much as we have Christ. . . . But while all the church of all nations and ages has apostles, prophets, miracles, gifts of healing, diversities of tongues in those once bestowed for its erection and completion, we have evangelists, bishops, deacons, rulers, exhorters, helps.³³

There was also a distinction made between a ministry performed on behalf of a particular church and that performed on behalf of the universal church.

Hence we conclude that the first and second ranks—viz., apostles and prophets, officers extraordinary, were given to the whole church in the aggregate; and that *teachers*, whether called evangelists, preachers, pastors, or teachers, constitute a second class of ordinary officers, and are given to every particular congregation that places itself in circumstances favorable to the obtaining of them.³⁴

In another passage on church organization he reasons that the officers or servants are of two classes—each particular community has its own bishops and deacons (presbytery and diaconate), and there are officers that belong to the whole Christian community. "Such were the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, and public messengers of the Apostolic Age, and such still are the missionaries and messengers belonging to the communities of any one state, nation, or province."³⁵

Although the ministry is divinely given to the church, it does not constitute a distinct clergy class nor is it to arrogate titles to itself. He strongly condemned the love for titles and especially the making of an ecclesiastical title a part of a person's name every time he was addressed.³⁶ To break with past associations he favored using "overseer" for "bishop," "senior" for "presbyter," and "servant" for "deacon." Nevertheless, he continued to bow to common designations, as in the statement, "The standing and immutable ministry of the Christian community is composed of Bishops, Deacons, and Evangelists."³⁷ These permanent offices in the church were not of

such a nature as to raise their occupants to a peculiar status above that of the ordinary Christian. Speaking of the New Testament bishop, he makes a declaration applicable to his view of all ministers:

But this bishop is neither priest, ambassador, minister of religion, clergyman, nor a reverend divine; but simply one that has the oversight of one voluntary society, who, when he leaves that society, has no office in any other in consequence of his being an officer in that. . . . To suppose the contrary is to constitute different orders of men, or to divide the church into the common classes of clergy and laity, than which nothing is more essentially opposite to the genius and spirit of Christianity.³⁸

Good order demands the selection of public functionaries to represent the congregation and fulfill the administrative posts left by Christ in His church. It further demands an appropriate manner for this selection. The permanent officers of bishops, deacons, and evangelists are appointed to office "by the election and appointment of the community."³⁹

Q Is there any mode of induction into these offices?

A Yes; every thing in the Christian Kingdom that is done is to be done in some manner. Every thing is to be done in the name of the King, or by calling upon his name. Authority is always conferred by the voice and by the hands of the community over which the supervision or presidency is to be exercised. Their own voice and their own hands, their election and their separation and consecration to the work, are necessary to the appointment of all public functionaries.⁴⁰

On the issue "whether is the right to ordain derived directly from the Lord to the church; or indirectly through a long succession of ordained persons" Mr. Campbell turned to the realm of government, as he often did, to find an analogy to what he considered the real nature of the case.

All the political official grace or authority vested in the present President of the U. S. was not transmitted to him by his official predecessor. It comes to him through the Constitution of the U. S. and his oath of allegiance to that Constitution. So is it in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. The New Constitution or Testament, invests every officer with the grace and authority of his office.⁴¹

What then is ordination? "It is the solemn election and appointment of persons to the oversight and service of a Christian community. To ordain is to appoint; and all appointment . . . was in the beginning *by an election of the whole community.*" Campbell adds, "Still we must distinguish between the election or appointment and the mode of consecration or induction."⁴² He reasons that there must be some form of setting persons apart to the work. The choice of the community, however, is the essential consideration, without which all forms would be unavailing. In this case, *vox populi vox Dei*. "To comprehend the meaning of the form it is necessary to regard the ordination throughout in the light of a cove-

nant, or an agreement between the congregation that elects and the persons elected."⁴³ The items of agreement underlying the procedure involve a recognition by the congregation of a need for leadership, so that it agrees with the men proved to be qualified by the Holy Spirit that they devote themselves to the work, in consideration of which it agrees to submit to them in the Lord and sustain them in all respects required.

It follows that the forms themselves must in some way correspond with the thing signified, and necessarily the parties themselves, and not a distinct order, are to take part. . . . The corollary from these premises is, that the congregation herself elects and ordains all her officers.⁴⁴

From the viewpoint of a covenant no person can take part in the ceremony of induction unless he is regarded as a member of the congregation and under the authority of those invested with office or is present to give directions to them as a servant of the congregation.

What are the forms of ordination? "Imposition of hands, accompanied with fasting and prayer."⁴⁵ The placing of the holy hands of an old soldier of the Cross on the head of another person possesses more spiritual power than all the ordinations of the historic episcopate. Who may or ought to lay hands on bishops, deacons, or messengers elect? "I answer, without dubiety and in few words, The Community, the whole community, or such elders of the community as may be approved in behalf of the congregation."⁴⁶ That the ordination is in the nature of a covenant is one of the reasons urged for this point.⁴⁷ If the church already has an eldership, "The presbytery or eldership of a single church, may ordain an evangelist, an elder, or a deacon,"⁴⁸ acting in the capacity of representatives of the whole congregation. Where Apostles laid on hands in the congregations where they happened to be, they did so as seniors and not as apostles.⁴⁹ The case of Titus being commanded to ordain is explained by saying that a command to an agent by those in authority does not necessarily imply that he must execute it in person or with his own hands.⁵⁰ If each congregation selects its own officers according to the suggestions of the Holy Spirit found in the New Testament, then it has its officers by divine appointment (Acts 20:28). When ordination is performed according to the manner sanctioned by the actions of the Apostles, the Apostles in a spiritual way participate and give their approval.⁵¹

The order of ordination is summarized in three steps: (1) After having proved the abilities and character of the men under consideration, the church appoints a day for their election. (2) Having agreed on the men, the church sets a day of consecration. (3) That day is a day of fasting; the members select representatives to impose hands; all unite in prayer; the congregation pronounces "Amen."⁵²

The duties of evangelists, bishops, and deacons encompass the essential activities necessary to the life of the church. Although

evangelists in New Testament times were often endowed with special spiritual gifts, such were not essential to the exercise of their office. "Evangelists, or preachers of the Gospel, are not only ordinary, but necessary officers."⁵³ Their activities and selection are stated in the following terms:

Evangelists must of necessity do at least three works. They must preach the word, baptize, and teach converts the ways of the Lord. Where churches do not exist they plant them and set things in order. They ordain elders and officers when this is expedient.

We therefore conclude that evangelists are not only one of the most necessary and useful officers of the Christian kingdom, but also that they are to be set apart to the work by prayer, fasting, and the laying on of the hands of the elder-ship (Acts 13:1-3).⁵⁴

Evangelists, or, as he sometimes delighted to call them, "messengers," are separated to the work of proclaiming the word and planting churches by an individual church and are responsible to it. Nevertheless, they belong to the church universal, in behalf of which they labor. This latter principle was to be used by Campbell later to justify their being sent out by an association of churches organized in a co-operative society.⁵⁵ Evangelists should labor among a people until they are able to make a Scriptural selection of qualified bishops and deacons. "But constitutionally it is they themselves, and not he that chooses for them their officers."⁵⁶

If a congregation comes together without the agency of a preacher, the responsibility for taking the lead in instruction, worship, and administration of the ordinances is granted and not to be assumed. The congregation selects the best it has to act in a leadership capacity; these are not bishops and are not to act as such. But since this is an infant church, it does not need learned men in its ministry. The principle that those who are most advanced are to instruct those less advanced in Christian learning is a rule of universal application. "There is no wild democracy, no despotic papacy, no self-created ministry, no *lay* administration of ordinances in this economy."⁵⁷ The last phrase apparently is based on the principle that all are priests.

In the New Testament the highest office in a local church is described by two designations—*episcopos* or bishop and *presbuteros*, or elder. When contemplated with reference to their age, they were called elders, because they were selected from among the older men. But when regarded with respect to their official relation, they were called overseers or bishops, because their duty was to watch over the flock. There was always a plurality appointed in each New Testament congregation.⁵⁸ But Campbell recognized that it was natural for one of superior abilities to be regarded as the president of the congregational presbytery; one must distinguish influence and presidency from authority and official position. Moreover, the single congregation was the largest diocese in the New Testament.

The qualifications for bishops were those that inhered in the nature of their office. They must have the ability to teach, to govern and preside, and the reputation of piety and humanity.⁵⁹ The degree of attainment is relative to the character and attainments of the community they are called upon to serve.⁶⁰ The duties of bishops, then, are to teach (this includes all forms, but they need not do it all themselves), to rule well (this involves more than presiding but includes watching in behalf of souls), and to visit (in sense of Jas. 1:27).⁶¹ The bishops are not lawgivers, but administrative officers in the kingdom on behalf of Jesus and representatives of the church before the world.

Not much is said by Campbell on the subject of deacons. Chiefly, their activities are set forth in terms of the temporalities of the church. The terms steward, treasurer, almoner, servant, although not perfectly synonymous, are used by Campbell to express the office and duty of the Scriptural deacon. Out of the same fund the deacons set three tables: the Lord's Table, the bishop's table, and the poor's table. Certain situations may demand the presence of deaconesses in a church.⁶² The essential qualification of deacon is that he be a business man of known fidelity and integrity.⁶³

Mr. Campbell sums up his view of an ideal church, so far as organization goes, in the following statement: "A community with its bishops and deacons at home, and its evangelists abroad, every one faithfully at his post, performing his duties to the Lord and to the people, fully displayed the active and salutary spirit of the Christian institution."⁶⁴

Each local church functions in the mutual edification of its members and worship unto God. All citizens should be instructed in the law of the kingdom. "Reading, teaching, and exhortation, then, are all important in the regular meetings of the brethren."⁶⁵

The other social ordinances inculcated upon, and practiced by, the apostolic churches are still necessary to edification, and obligatory upon us. Such are social prayer, praise, and the Lord's Supper. These are equally incumbent upon all Christian congregations in all meetings of the Lord's Day.⁶⁶

Alexander Campbell writes movingly in describing the solemnity, devotion of feeling, and outward decorum which characterizes an assembly of the saints met for Divine worship. Among his recommendations are that prayer be performed while kneeling, the hymns sung while standing, and the Lord's Supper be eaten with the brethren sitting together in the assembly room.⁶⁷

Discipline, as a function of the church, was treated by Campbell as a means to edification, and hence something to be attended to on the Lord's Day before the whole church. Ultimately it is the whole congregation which must act in cases of discipline, but the case is judged by the "presidents" as the organs of the community. The body concurs in their recommendations, but is not called upon to

vote. That would be equivalent to asking them whether they will execute the law of Christ. Where the congregation joins with their overseers is in determining the facts.⁶⁸ The proper area for the exercise of discipline is stated in this way: "Un-Christian words and deeds, not men's private opinions, but their individual practices."⁶⁹ In matters of personal difficulties the procedure of Matt. 18 is to be followed. And in such a situation the case is not to be carried beyond the local church; its decision is final.⁷⁰ In all cases, the dispute and the evidence is laid before the elders of the church. In human affairs they represent the judges in Christ's kingdom.

Mr. Campbell finds room in his congregationalism for appeals from one community to another in certain kinds of affairs.

That every community is independent in managing its own peculiar affairs, has always been our judgment; but that in any matter affecting the conscience or character, or prosperity of other communities, no community can scripturally, prudentially, or justly decide any question in disregard of the views, feelings, and judgment of other communities. Nor can a majority oppress a weak minority without the right of appeal from its decisions.⁷¹

The concern of congregation for congregation means that if one is in error the other will approach it in love to correct the error. In disputes between congregations other congregations will adjudicate and join in censure or approval. In doctrinal affairs an excommunicated person may appeal to a disinterested community or communities. The following considerations are advanced as a basis for this: (1) That no community called a church is absolutely independent of the church of God, but amenable to the whole church for its administration of its affairs. (2) That when a church has any matter on hand which involves the peace and prosperity of other communities or the conscience of a member it is incumbent on it to wait the decision of one or more disinterested communities.⁷² Acts 15 is used as a precedent for appeals to other congregations for aid in reaching decisions. Mr. Campbell in so doing notes the fact that this chapter has been abused by making it the basis of all the church councils ever held, but if the chapter is not extended beyond its import such inter-congregational meetings are appropriate.

The main function for the church is to preach the Gospel. The church is a missionary society. It is the pillar and support of the truth. There are many by-products of the Gospel, but to Campbell the church has done its work in the world, when it reproduces other churches. With the oracles and ordinances of the reign of heaven it is fully adequate to the conversion of the whole world if it does not prove negligent in its task.⁷³ To perform this task demands co-operation. This consideration plus the disorderly direction the restoration movement was taking in many places led Campbell to urge a strengthened church organization and the forming of an organ through which the churches could co-operate. This constituted Mr.

Campbell's greatest modification of his principles of Independency. His writings resulted in the forming of the American Christian Missionary Society in 1849.⁷⁴

Mr. Campbell's arguments on the subject of congregational co-operation are noted here because it was within the framework of the practical problem of evangelization that they took form.

Christian communities should co-operate in all things which they cannot so well accomplish by their individual enterprise.

To do this successfully, they must either occasionally meet together, by deputies, messengers, or representatives, and consult together for the better performance of their duties. These meetings, being voluntary expedients in matters of expediency, such persons have no authority to legislate in any matter of faith or moral duty, but to attend to the ways and means of successful co-operation in all objects of duty before them.⁷⁵

But Campbell was not content with this advisory function and saw the conventions as an intermediary actually performing the work. The following rather lengthy passage represents his whole viewpoint expressed on many occasions.

We must make a broad, clear, and indelible distinction between the elements of *faith*, *piety*, and *morality*, and matters of temporal expediency. The former are wholly and exclusively of divine authority. . . .

Matters of prudential arrangement for the evangelizing of the world, for the better application of our means and resources according to the exigencies of society and the ever varying complexion of things around us, are left without a single law, statute, ordinance, or enactment in all the New Testament. . . .

Whatever, then, secures the independence and individual responsibility of every particular Christian community, and at the same time leaves open to covenant agreement all matters of co-operation in promoting the common cause of Christianity in the world, fully satisfies my mind as to duty and obligation. Hence the Congregational or Baptist associational form of uniting or co-operating, when divested of those appendages, against which we remonstrated 25 years ago, is now and has always been, more acceptable to my views than any other form of co-operation in Christendom. . . .

These covenants or constitutions have, of course, no other authority than the voluntary agreement of the parties or churches entering into them. But they are morally binding. . . .

These meetings should be at regular and stated intervals, but susceptible of special calls on special emergencies. As such meetings have no special control over individual churches, nor any deputed or Divine right to exercise jurisdiction over particular communities, their attention is called and their deliberations are to be devoted to general objects, such as cannot be so well dispensed or attended to by particular congregations.

They will, therefore, occasionally require agents or missionaries, and these must necessarily be under their direction and control, as they must be sustained by their liberality, or that of the churches which in their associational character employ them.⁷⁶

Although Mr. Campbell could rightly claim that his basic principles remained unaltered, it is also clear that the preceding passages represent an emphasis on the church universal in contrast to the emphasis seen earlier on the local church. Such an emphasis made logical an organizational expression of this entity on the earth. However, nothing contributed more to turning the Disciples into simply another denomination and to creating division within the ranks of his followers, contrary to his deeper desires, than the principles on which the Missionary Society were founded.

¹Since this paper appeared in its first draft, I have read the new work by D. Ray Lindley, *The Apostle of Freedom* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1957). This book represents the most comprehensive treatment of the subject of this paper and provides an illuminating introduction to Campbell's thought. However, I have not felt it necessary to change any points made or to revise my choice of representative quotations.

²Hiram VanKirk, *A History of the Theology of the Disciples of Christ* (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Co., 1907), p. 111.

³*The Millennial Harbinger* (Bethany, Va.: Alexander Campbell), Fourth Series, Vol. III, p. 106.

⁴W. E. Garrison, *The Sources of Alexander Campbell's Theology* (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Co., 1900), pp. 73f.

⁵Campbell's emphasis on unity and the methodology of achieving unity have been frequent objects of study. See, for example, J. R. Kellems, *Alexander Campbell and the Disciples* (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1930). For an application of Campbell's teaching to the modern ecumenical movement see the excellent works of William Robinson: *The Shattered Cross* (Birmingham: Berean Press, 1945); *What Churches of Christ Stand For* (Birmingham: Berean Press, 1929); *The Biblical Doctrine of the Church* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1948).

⁶Lindley, *op. cit.*, pp. 58ff.

⁷See the contribution by W. E. Garrison in *The Nature of the Church* (London: SCM Press, 1952) edited by R. N. Flew for the World Conference on Faith and Order.

⁸Garrison, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

⁹Kellems, *op. cit.*, p. 377.

¹⁰Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co.), p. 126.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 146. ¹²*Ibid.*, p. 125.

¹³*Millennial Harbinger*, Third Series, Vol. II, p. 62.

¹⁴*Christian System*, pp. 123ff.

¹⁵*Millennial Harbinger*, Third Series, Vol. II, p. 62. For the importance Campbell attached to this point, see Lindley, *op. cit.*, pp. 82ff.

¹⁶*Millennial Harbinger*, First Series, Vol. III, pp. 351ff.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 192.

¹⁸*Christian System*, p. 150.

¹⁹*Millennial Harbinger*, Fourth Series, Vol. V, p. 373.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 380. ²¹*Christian Baptist*, Vol. V, p. 239.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 240.

²³*Christian Baptist*, Vol. V, pp. 199f.

²⁴*Millennial Harbinger*, Fourth Series, Vol. II, p. 123. Cf. Lindley, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-89.

²⁵*Millennial Harbinger*, Third Series, Vol. VI, p. 92.

²⁶*Millennial Harbinger*, First Series, Vol. III, pp. 360ff.

²⁷*Christian Baptist*, Vol. II, p. 71. For Campbell's strong feeling against a union of church and state see Lindley, *op. cit.*, pp. 24f, 28ff, 155f.

²⁸*Millennial Harbinger*, Fourth Series, Vol. II, p. 123.

²⁹*Millennial Harbinger*, Third Series, Vol. VI, p. 221. Later in arguing for co-operative associations of churches he stated: "There may be no more scriptural or rational impropriety in calling all the churches in England, Macedonia, . . . , the church in England, the church in Macedonia, . . . , inasmuch as all the particular churches in the world are, collectively the church of Christ." Fourth Series, Vol. III, p. 304. A harmonization is possible if a distinction is made between a title and a descriptive term.

³⁰*Millennial Harbinger*, Third Series, Vol. VI, p. 223.

³¹*Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 62.

³²*Ibid.*, Fourth Series, Vol. V, p. 373.

³³*Millennial Harbinger*, Third Series, Vol. II, p. 63.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 63.

³⁵*Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 269.

³⁶*Ibid.*, First Series, Vol. I, pp. 427f. Despite Campbell's protest there was a fondness in the Restoration for "Elder" as such a title.

³⁷*Christian System*, p. 60.

³⁸*Christian Baptist*, Vol. I, p. 55.

³⁹*Millennial Harbinger*, First Series, Vol. II, p. 351.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 351.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, Fourth Series, Vol. II, p. 482.

⁴²*Ibid.*, First Series, Vol. VI, p. 497.

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 497.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 497f.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 498.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 498.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 498. The passage elaborates other reasons for this procedure.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, Fourth Series, Vol. III, p. 482.

⁴⁹*Christian System*, p. 65.

⁵⁰*Millennial Harbinger*, Fourth Series, Vol. III, p. 482. A passage in the same volume seems to contradict the general tenor of the other remarks which are to the effect that the congregation both elects and installs. Having stressed the congregational element in Acts 6, he says, "But they did not actually invest them with the office. The people's voice and suffrage went no farther [than electing]" (p. 184). Campbell's later writings always speak of apostles and evangelists ordaining, but without comment. If, however, it is understood that these men ordain as representatives of the congregation, there is no necessary contradiction. Still, although Campbell had clearer principles about ordination than most who have followed in his steps, a question may be raised about the role of evangelists in providing for the organization of a church (see next page).

⁵¹*Millennial Harbinger*, First Series, Vol. VI, p. 500.

⁵²*Ibid.*, p. 502. ⁵³*Ibid.*, Third Series, Vol. II, p. 64.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁵⁵However, service to the universal church was hardly incompatible with responsibility to a local church.

⁵⁶*Millennial Harbinger*, First Series, Vol. VI, p. 496.

Campbell warns that an itinerant preacher may be like the ostrich in laying an egg but not caring for it. *Ibid.*, p. 527.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 495.

⁵⁸Kellems, *op. cit.*, pp. 384ff.

⁵⁹*Millennial Harbinger*, First Series, Vol. III, p. 351.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, Fourth Series, Vol. III, p. 247.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, First Series, Vol. VI, p. 504.

⁶²*Christian Baptist*, Vol. IV, p. 210.

⁶³*Millennial Harbinger*, First Series, Vol. III, p. 351.

- ⁶⁴*Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 520. ⁶⁵*Ibid.*, Third Series, Vol II, p. 65.
⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 65. ⁶⁷*Ibid.*, p. 65. ⁶⁸*Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 66.
⁶⁹*Ibid.*, First Series, Vol. III, p. 351.
⁷⁰*Ibid.*, Fourth Series, Vol. III, p. 491.
⁷¹*Ibid.*, New Series, Vol. IV, p. 504.
⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 503. ⁷³Kellems, *op. cit.*, pp. 377ff.
⁷⁴E. I. West, *The Search for the Ancient Order* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1949), Vol. I, pp. 166ff. Campbell's position on Societies, whether he changed, and if so, how much, is discussed, pp. 181-195.
⁷⁵*Millennial Harbinger*, Third Series, Vol. II, p. 66.
⁷⁶*Ibid.*, Vol. VI, pp. 270ff.

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